



NO. 53... JUNE... JULY

TEN CENTS



BATMAN

A 52 PAGE
MAGAZINE





*Bobby and Jane tell you why they
chose **ROADMASTER*** for
their Summer Vacation*

● "When Dad said we kids could get new bicycles for summer vacation, we rushed downtown and looked at every bicycle we could find. We even tried them out, and what do you think? We both chose Roadmaster Luxury Liners. They're really super! Roadmasters have so many things just like Dad's new automobile—chromium, Gothic fenders . . . stop-light operated from the brake . . . a real searchbeam headlamp . . . broad base rims that hold more air . . . two-tone colors and shiny sparkling-embossed chrome trim. Yes, and the man who sold them to us said they were 100% safer because the frames are electronically welded. We think they're the best-looking bicycles on the road, and the safest. If you're going to get a new bike for summer vacation, be sure you get a Roadmaster just like ours. Mail the coupon and the Roadmaster people will send you a colored folder telling all about Roadmasters, 'America's Finer Bicycles'."



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BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN
-THE BOY WONDER-

CAN YOU IMAGINE THE
JOKER, SARDONIC JESTER
OF THE UNDERWORLD, RAIDING A JEWELRY
SHOP, YET ESCAPING WITH ONLY A
STOLEN HAIRPIN AS HIS LOOT? WHAT'S
BEHIND THIS APPARENTLY RIDICULOUS
CRIME AND OTHER PREPOSTEROUS
PRANKS THAT FOLLOW? WHAT NEW
KNAVERY HAS THE HARLEQUIN OF
CRIME DEVISED IN AN ALL-OUT ATTEMPT
TO MAKE MONKEYS OUT OF BATMAN
AND ROBIN? THE AMAZING ANSWER
-IS IN THE HARROWING ADVENTURE

HA
CALLED: "A HAIRPIN,
A HOE,
A HACKSAW,
A HOLE
IN THE
GROUND!"

Ho HA
HA HA
Ho HA
HA HA



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IN HIS SECRET HIDEOUT NEAR GOTHAM CITY, THAT FEARSOME VILLAIN, THE JOKER, TAKES STRANGE INVENTORY OF HIS POSSESSIONS...

MY GOLD ROOM! TREASURE ENOUGH TO BUY THE WORLD—AND YET, IT SOMEHOW DOES NOT SATISFY ME...

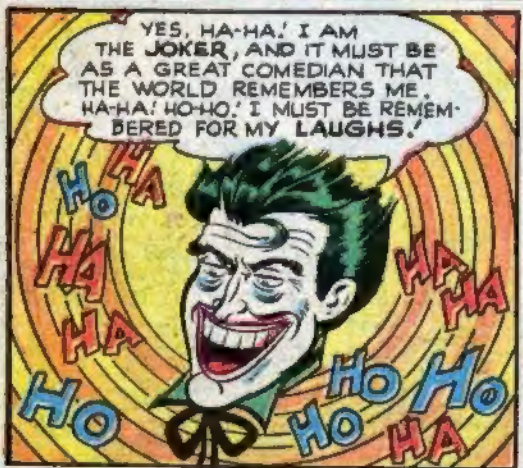


A MOMENT LATER, THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME ENTERS HIS MAGNIFICENT SILVER ROOM...

SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMONDS IN MY JEWEL ROOM! I HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED—EXCEPT THAT WHICH I WANT THE MOST, FAME AS THE WORLD'S GREATEST CLOWN!



YES, HA-HA! I AM THE JOKER, AND IT MUST BE AS A GREAT COMEDIAN THAT THE WORLD REMEMBERS ME. HA-HA! HO-HO! I MUST BE REMEMBERED FOR MY LAUGHS.



HIS TWISTED BRAIN FIRED BY THIS NEWEST FANCY, THE JOKER SCORNFULLY LISTENS TO A TOP RADIO COMIC...

LISTEN TO THEM LAUGHING AT A RANK AMATEUR! HA-HA! I WILL TEACH THEM SOMETHING ABOUT LAUGHTER.

SO THE DOG SAID: "I'LL HAVE TO BONE-UP ON THAT."

HA!
HA!
HA!



AND TELEVISION! HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT COMEDY! I—THE JOKER—WILL TEACH HIM! I WILL WRITE A BOOK—A WHOLE VOLUME OF BOOKS! I WILL BECOME THE AUTHORITY ON COMEDY!

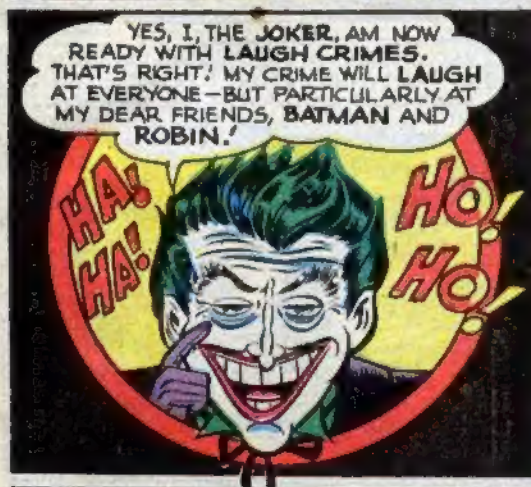


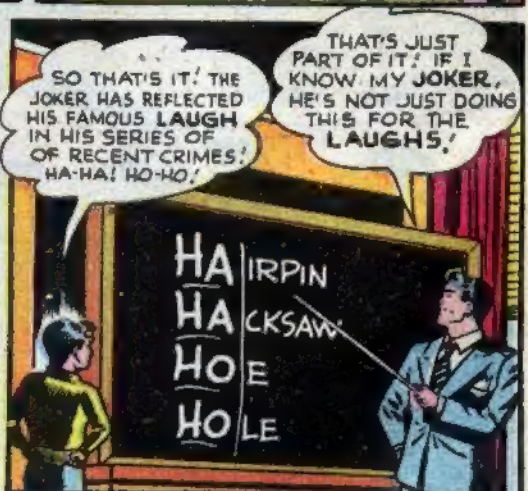
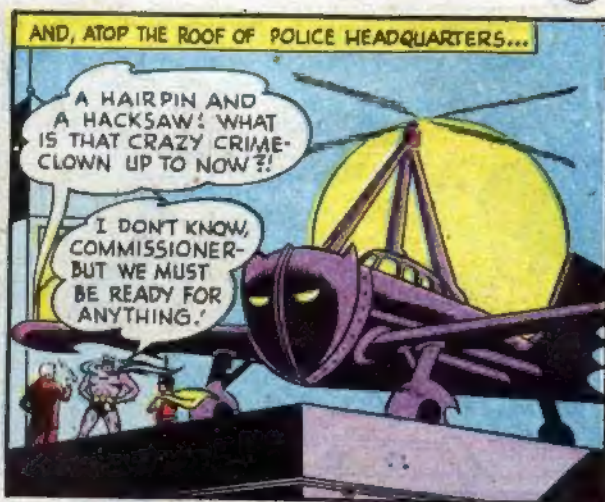
MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF GOTHAM CITY, SOCIALITE BRUCE WAYNE, AND HIS YOUNG WARD, DICK GRAYSON, ARE ALSO BUSY WITH TELEVISION...

TELEVISION FOR THE BATMOBILE—SOME DEAL!

IT WILL MEAN FASTER AND BETTER IDENTIFICATION OF CRIMINALS. NOW, POLICE CAN FLASH US PICTURES OF WANTED CROOKS, RATHER THAN JUST DESCRIPTIONS.







SUDDENLY, AN EERIE SIGNAL LIGHTS UP THE SKY, SUMMONING THE GREAT CRIME-FIGHTERS, BATMAN AND ROBIN, TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

AND UNDOUBTEDLY IT INVOLVES THE JOKER!

SOMETHING'S UP!

PRESENTLY...

THIS RECORD JUST ARRIVED, BATMAN. IT'S FOR YOU — FROM THE JOKER!

HA-HA! BATMAN! BY NOW YOU'VE PROBABLY DISCOVERED THAT I'VE HIDDEN MY FAMOUS LAUGH WITHIN MY LATEST CRIMES! BUT WAIT, BATMAN—WAIT! WAIT TILL MY LAUGH STARTS TO ECHO!

ECHO? WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY THAT?

HMMM. ECHO MEANS TO COME BACK. COME ON, ROBIN—I THINK WE HAVE SOME MORE BLACKBOARD WORK TO DO!

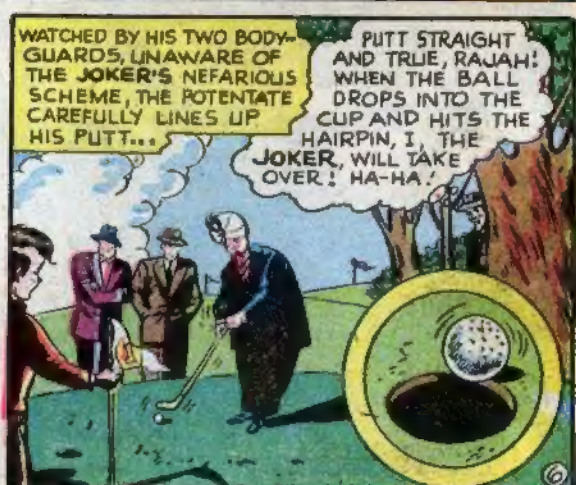
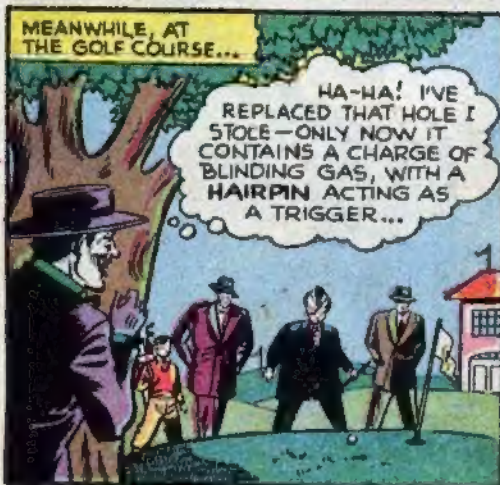
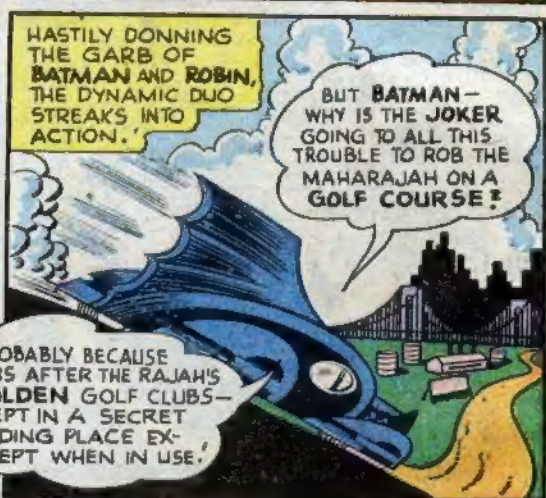
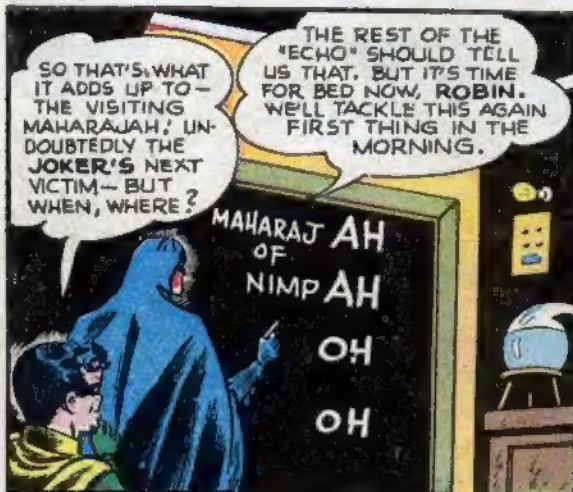
YOU SEE, ROBIN? MAYBE THIS IS WHAT THE JOKER MEANT. IF HIS LAUGH "CAME BACK", IT WOULD LOOK LIKE THIS.

HMMM. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE JOKER USED HIS LAUGH TO START WORDS. IF NOW HE USED THE "ECHO" TO END WORDS, HE MIGHT... THAT'S IT! I'VE GOT IT!

YES—BUT IT STILL DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

HA	IRPIN	AH
HA	CKSAW	AH
HO	E	OH
HOLE		OH





THE PUTT IS PERFECT, AND AS THE BALL DROPS, A CLOUD OF TEAR GAS BURSTS FROM THE CUP...

GET THOSE MASKS ON AND GRAB THE CLUBS!

CAN'T SEE (COUGH) FUMES...



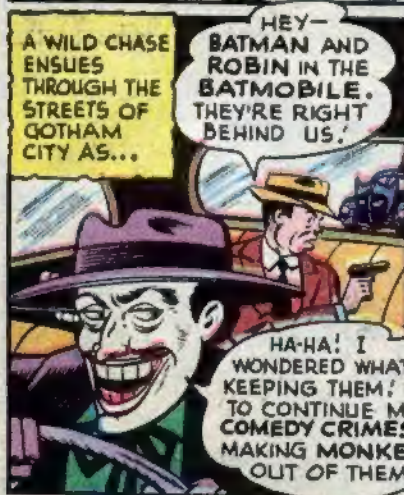
WE'RE TOO LATE! THE JOKER HAS THE CLUBS AND IS HEADED FOR HIS CAR!

BACK TO THE BATMOBILE! WE CAN CATCH THEM IN THAT!

MEANTIME...

A WILD CHASE ENSUES THROUGH THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY AS...

HEY—BATMAN AND ROBIN IN THE BATMOBILE. THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND US!

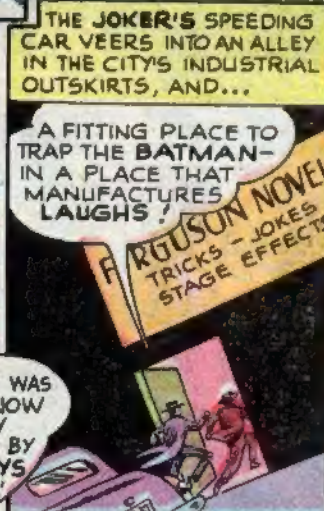


HA-HA! I WONDERED WHAT WAS KEEPING THEM! NOW TO CONTINUE MY COMEDY CRIMES BY MAKING MONKEYS OUT OF THEM!

THE JOKER'S SPEEDING CAR VEERS INTO AN ALLEY IN THE CITY'S INDUSTRIAL OUTSKIRTS, AND...

A FITTING PLACE TO TRAP THE BATMAN—IN A PLACE THAT MANUFACTURES LAUGHS!

A ROUSON NOVEL TRICKS - JOKES STAGE EFFECTS



BE CAREFUL! THE JOKER WILL BE TRICKIER THAN EVER IN THESE SURROUNDINGS!



THEY MUST HAVE GONE IN THAT BUILDING!



HA-HA! HO-HO! BUT REMEMBER—THE JOKER IS NOT TO BE SNEEZED AT!

KER-CHOO! IT'S—SNEEZING POWDER!

KER-CHOO!

CAUTIOUSLY, BATMAN AND ROBIN PICK UP THE TRAIL IN A MISTY WAREHOUSE FILLED WITH WEIRD PROPS AND TRICK DEVICES...

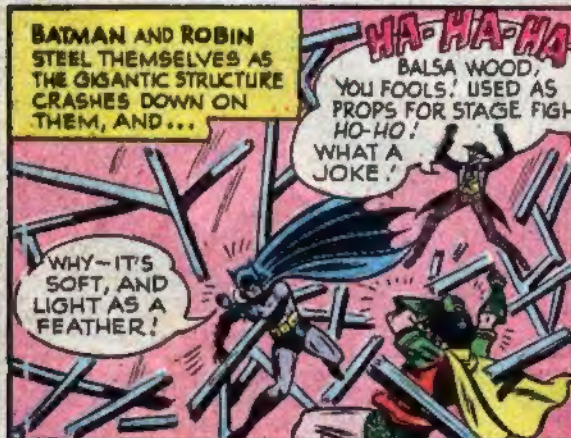


SUDDENLY, THE HARLEQUIN OF CRIME PICKS UP THE HUGE SKELETON PLATFORM, AND...

BRACE YOURSELF, ROBIN! WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE THIS THE BEST WAY WE CAN—NO TIME TO GET OUT OF THE WAY!

GOLLY! I NEVER KNEW THE JOKER WAS THAT STRONG!

HA-HA-HA! YOU TICKLE ME, BATMAN—YOU TICKLE ME!



BATMAN AND ROBIN STEEL THEMSELVES AS THE GIGANTIC STRUCTURE CRASHES DOWN ON THEM, AND...

HA-HA-HA

BALSA WOOD, YOU FOOLS! USED AS PROPS FOR STAGE FIGHTS! HO-HO! WHAT A JOKE!

WHY—IT'S SOFT, AND LIGHT AS A FEATHER!

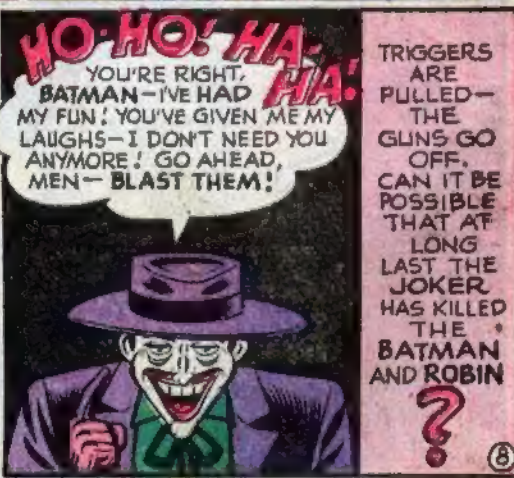


YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN, JOKER. NOW WE'RE GOING TO HAVE OURS!



SUDDENLY, THE JOKER'S JOVIALITY TURNS TO GRIM STERNNESS AS HE BARKS ORDERS TO HIS MEN, THEN...

NOT A STEP FORTHER, BATMAN—OR WE'LL LET YOU HAVE IT!



HO-HO! HA-HA!

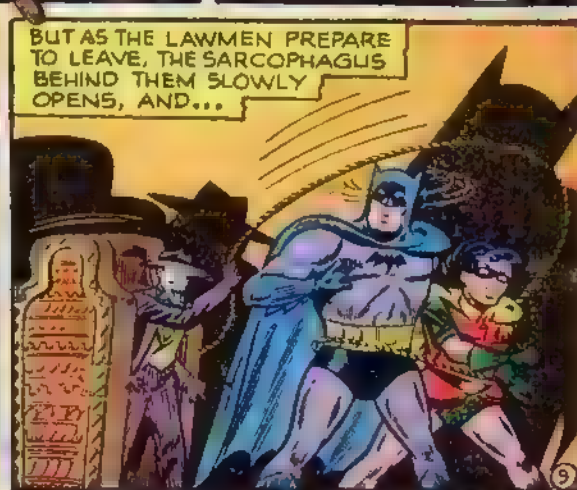
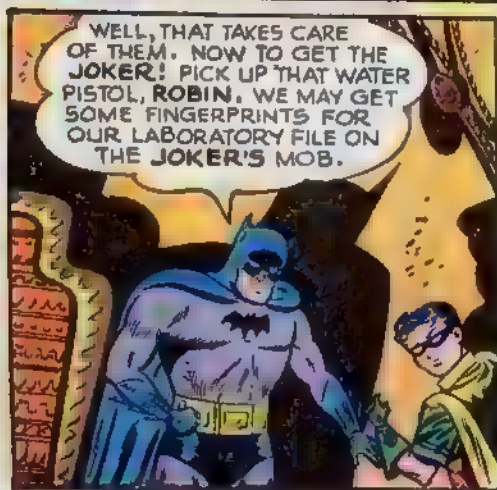
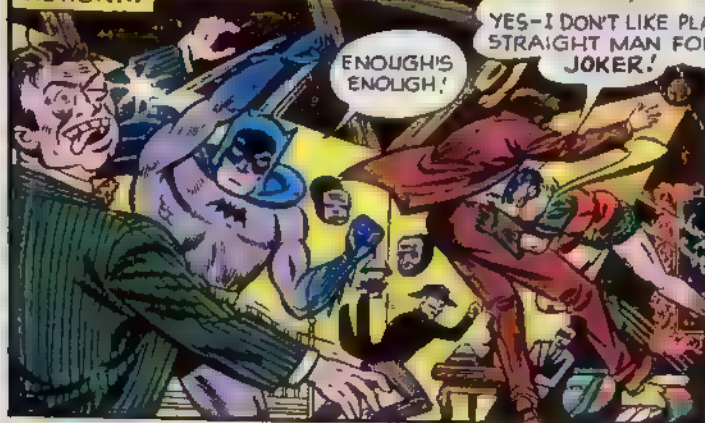
YOU'RE RIGHT, BATMAN—I'VE HAD MY FUN! YOU'VE GIVEN ME MY LAUGHS—I DON'T NEED YOU ANYMORE! GO AHEAD, MEN—BLAST THEM!

TRIGGERS ARE PULLED—THE GUNS GO OFF. CAN IT BE POSSIBLE THAT AT LONG LAST THE JOKER HAS KILLED THE BATMAN AND ROBIN?

?



BUT BEFORE THE JOKER AND HIS MEN CAN FULLY ENJOY THEIR MADCAP PRANK, THE ENRAGED CRIME-BUSTERS SWING INTO ACTION...



THE JOKER'S SWIFTESS SURPRISES BATMAN AND ROBIN. BEFORE THEY CAN RECOVER...



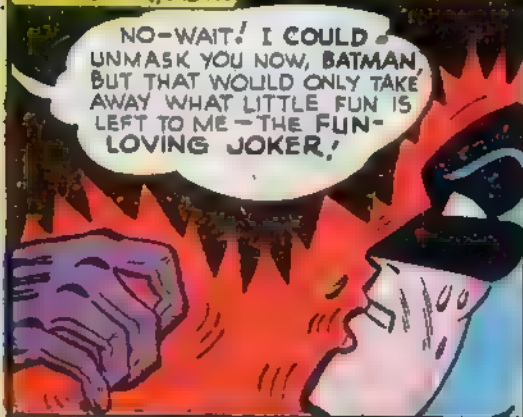
HA-HA! I HAVE ALL I NEED FOR THE LAUGH CHAPTER IN MY GREAT BOOK ON COMEDY! DON'T YOU AGREE, BATMAN?



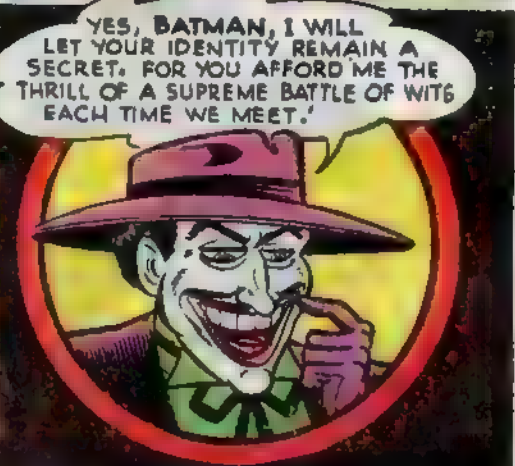
HEY, BOSS—LET'S SEE WHO THE BATMAN IS! TAKE OFF HIS MASK!

HA-HA! WHY NOT?

BUT SUDDENLY THE JOKER'S HAND HALTS IN MID-AIR, AS...

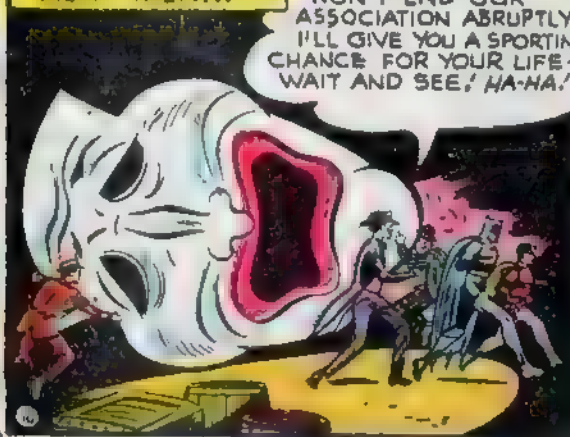


NO-WAIT! I COULD UNMASK YOU NOW, BATMAN, BUT THAT WOULD ONLY TAKE AWAY WHAT LITTLE FUN IS LEFT TO ME—THE FUN-LOVING JOKER!



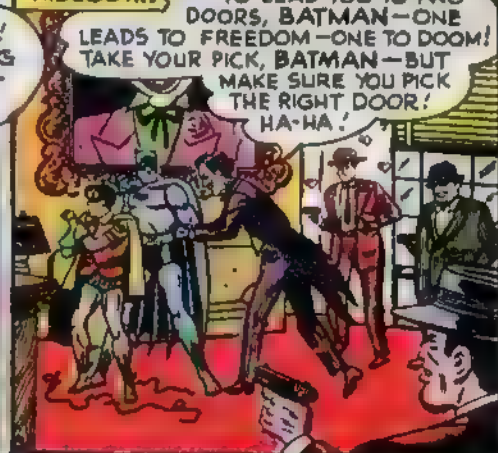
YES, BATMAN, I WILL LET YOUR IDENTITY REMAIN A SECRET. FOR YOU AFFORD ME THE THRILL OF A SUPREME BATTLE OF WITS EACH TIME WE MEET.

THE CRIME CLOWN QUICKLY CONFERS WITH HIS HENCHMEN. THEN...

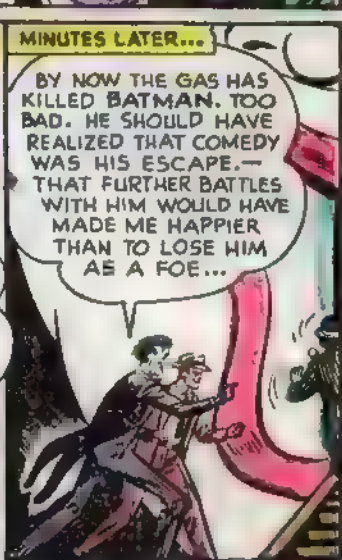
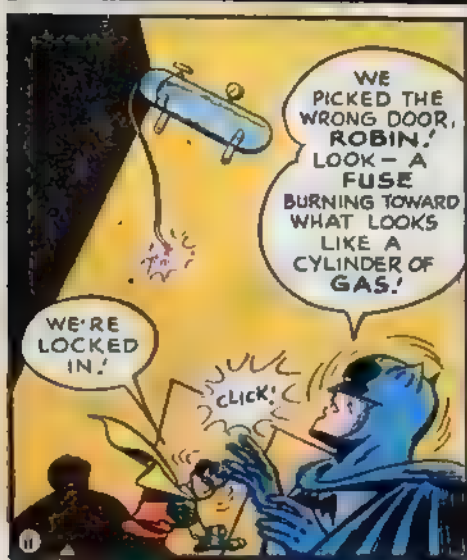
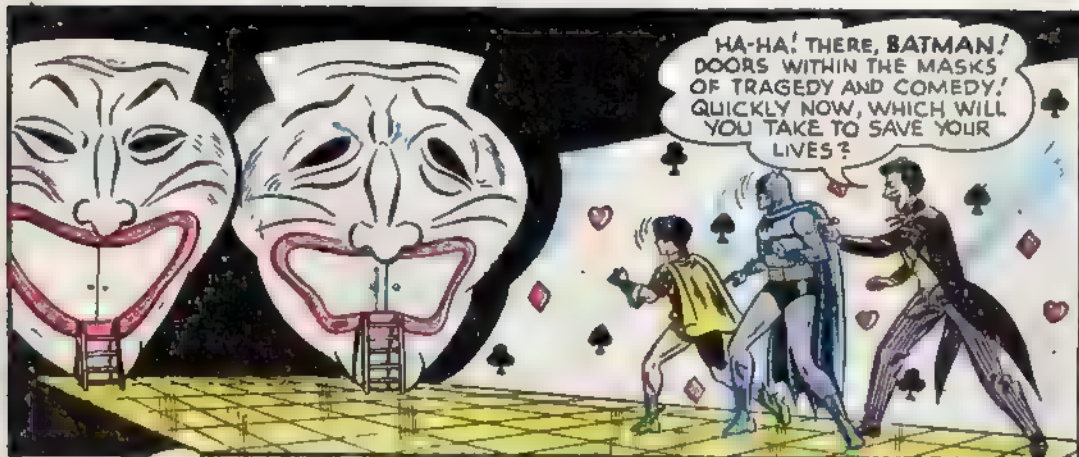


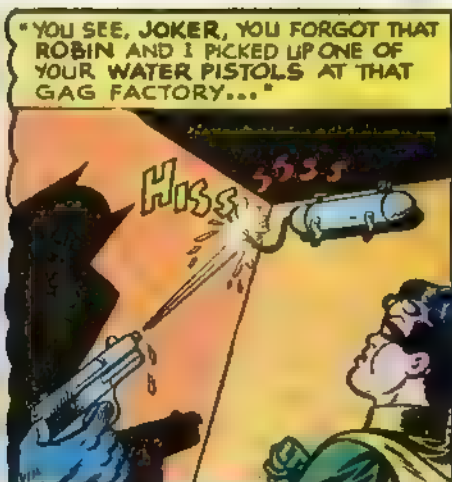
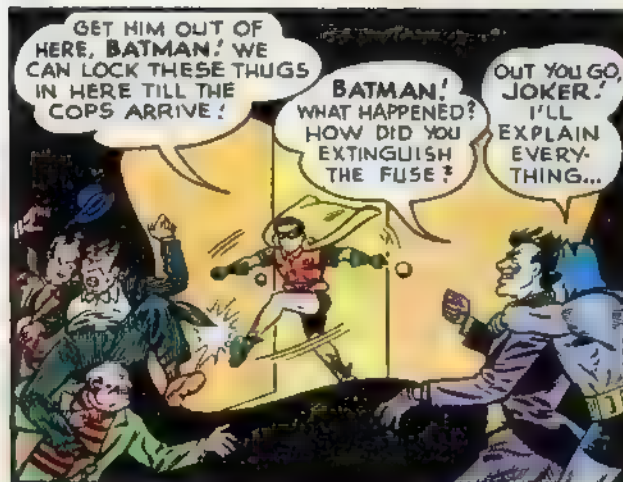
NO, BATMAN, I WON'T END OUR ASSOCIATION ABRUPTLY! I'LL GIVE YOU A SPORTING CHANCE FOR YOUR LIFE—WAIT AND SEE! HA-HA!

AND, HOURS LATER, AT THE JOKER'S HIDEOUT...



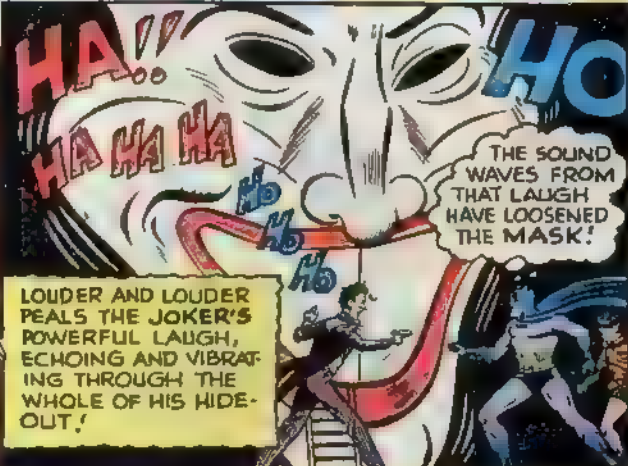
I'M GOING TO LEAD YOU TO TWO DOORS, BATMAN—ONE LEADS TO FREEDOM—ONE TO DOOM! TAKE YOUR PICK, BATMAN—BUT MAKE SURE YOU PICK THE RIGHT DOOR! HA-HA!





THEN, AS BATMAN AND ROBIN EMERGE FROM THE CELL WITH THE JOKER, HE SUDDENLY SNAKES OUT OF THEIR GRASP, AND...

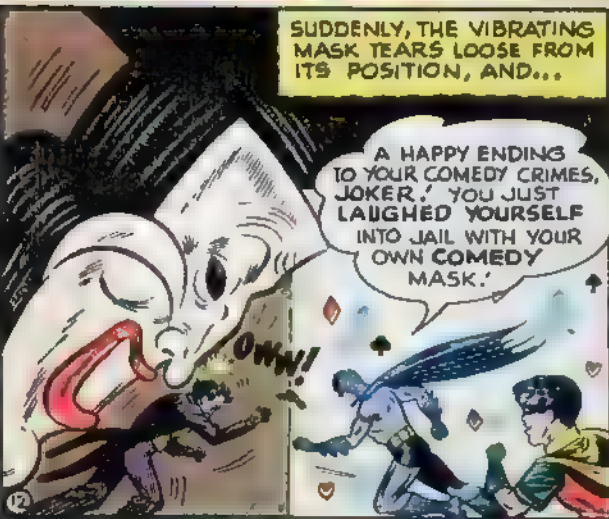
PRETTY CLEVER, THAT WATER PISTOL, BATMAN—BUT THIS IS A REAL PISTOL! HA-HA! HO-HO-HO!



SUDDENLY, THE VIBRATING MASK TEARS LOOSE FROM ITS POSITION, AND...

A HAPPY ENDING TO YOUR COMEDY CRIMES, JOKER! YOU JUST LAUGHED YOURSELF INTO JAIL WITH YOUR OWN COMEDY MASK!

OWW!



AND, THAT EVENING, IN THE BATCAVE TROPHY ROOM...

THIS IS THE HAIRPIN THE JOKER STOLE, DICK—A FITTING TROPHY AND MEMENTO OF THE CASE OF THE HAIRPIN, THE HACKSAW, THE HOE AND THE HOLE IN THE GROUND!





BATMAN



BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN

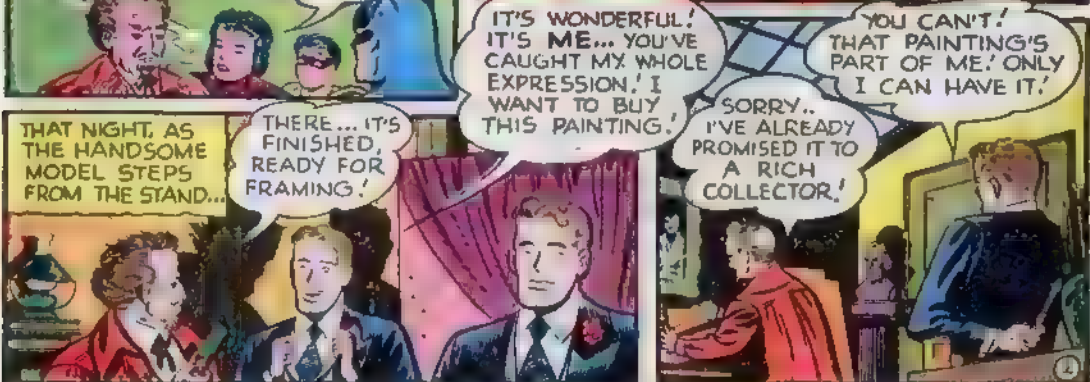
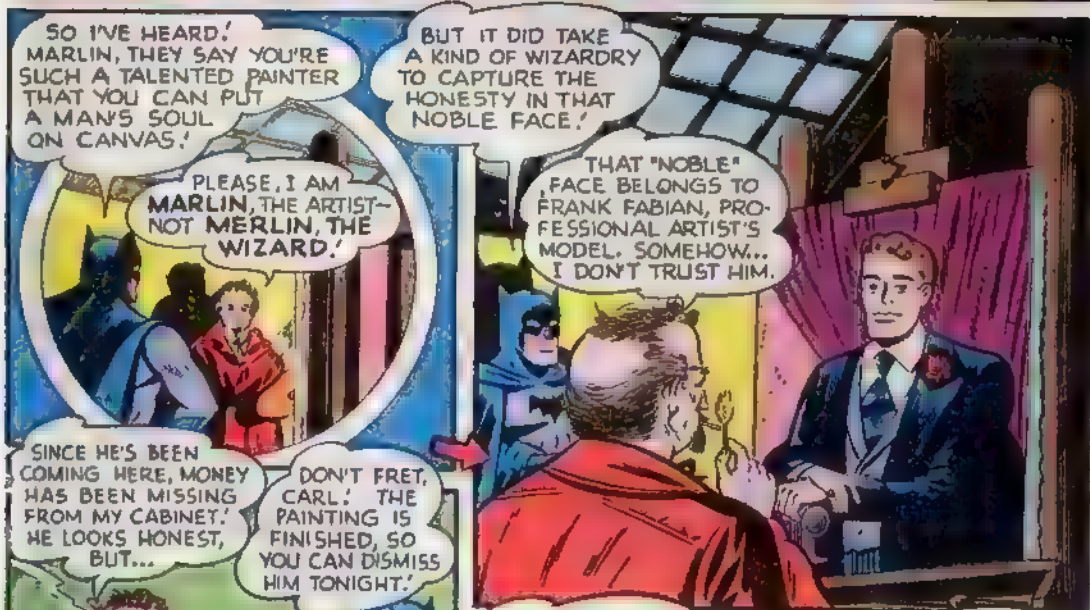
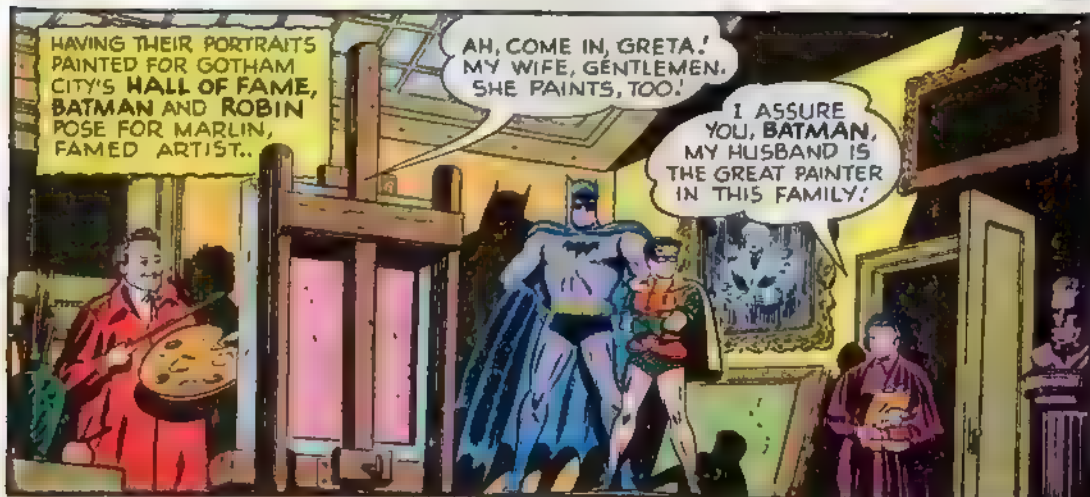
THE BOY WONDER

ED
KANE

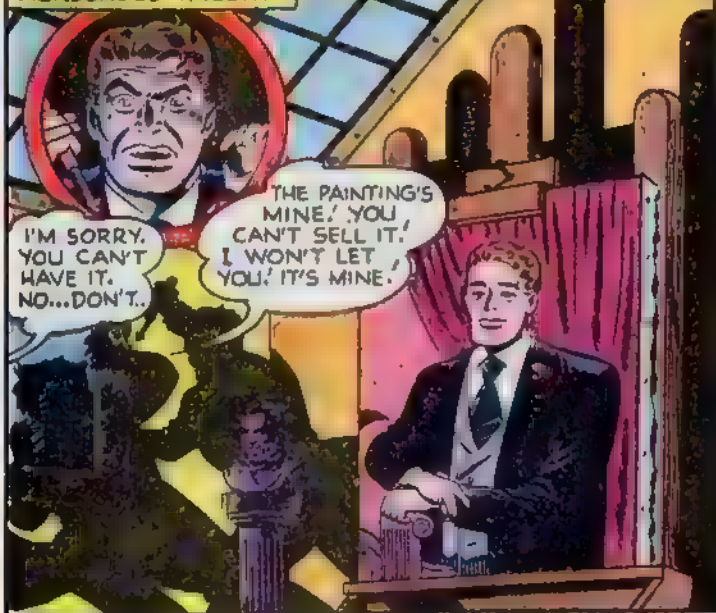
CAN A PAINTED FACE ON CANVAS AGE AND
CHANGE LIKE THE FLESH OF A MAN?
CAN BRUSH STROKES SHOW A MAN'S
TRUE SOUL AND CONSCIENCE?
BATMAN AND ROBIN FIND OUT
WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE THE
MOST BIZARRE MYSTERY OF THEIR
CAREERS AND COME FACE TO
FACE WITH...

**THE
PORTRAIT OF DOOM!**





ABRUPTLY, FABIAN'S INNOCENT FEATURES ARE TWISTED BY A MURDEROUS RAGE...



I'M SORRY. YOU CAN'T HAVE IT. NO...DON'T..

THE PAINTING'S MINE! YOU CAN'T SELL IT! I WON'T LET YOU! IT'S MINE.

YOU... YOU MAY DECEIVE THE WORLD WITH YOUR HARMLESS FACE, BUT YOUR PORTRAIT WILL SHOW YOUR REAL SELF... YOUR EVIL SOUL! AS YOU COMMIT EVIL, YOUR PORTRAIT WILL REVEAL IT!



SOON AFTER, AT THE RESTLESS, BLACK WATERS OF THE WATER-FRONT...

THE POLICE WILL HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF MURDER IF I GET RID OF THE BODY!



UNKNOWN TO FABIAN, MRS. MARLIN OVERHEARS EVERYTHING FROM AN ADJOINING ROOM...



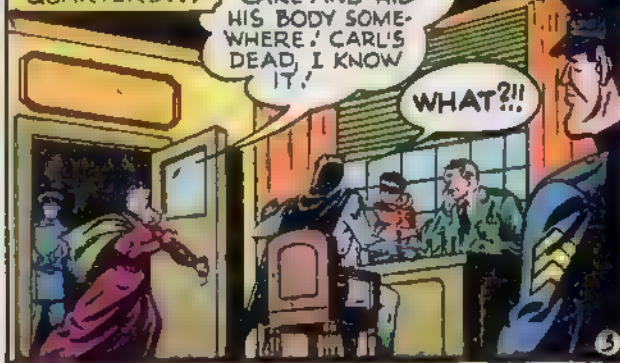
CARL... MY HUSBAND! FABIAN'S KILLED HIM! OHHHH...

BUT AS FABIAN FLEES, ONLY THE STARRING MOON SEES A HAND REACH FROM THE SWIFT RIVER...



THAT POST... IF I CAN JUST GRAB HOLD...

MEANWHILE, MRS. MARLIN REVIVES AND RUSHES TO POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS...



FABIAN STABBED CARL AND HID HIS BODY SOMEWHERE! CARL'S DEAD, I KNOW IT!

WHAT?!!

BUT AFTERWARD, IN HIS GARRET, FABIAN DENIES ANY KNOWLEDGE OF MARLIN'S DISAPPEARANCE.

YOU SAY YOU DIDN'T KILL MARLIN? THEN HOW DID YOU GET THE PORTRAIT?

HE GAVE IT TO ME! DO I LOOK LIKE A MURDERER?

MUCH LATER, FABIAN LAUGHS WITH SAVAGE GLEE...

I'VE GOTTEN AWAY WITH MURDER BECAUSE OF MY FACE! HA! HA! WHY SHOULD I WORK FOR MONEY WHEN I CAN STEAL AND BE THOUGHT INNOCENT? MY FACE IS MY FORTUNE! HA! HA!

SUDDENLY, FABIAN HESITATES BEFORE HIS PORTRAIT, PUZZLED...

STRANGE! THE EXPRESSION LOOKS CHANGED! THERE SEEMS TO BE CRUELTY IN THE MOUTH... CUNNING IN THE EYES! AGH... IT MUST BE A TRICK OF THE LIGHT!

THE SIMPLE, HONEST FEATURES OF FABIAN'S FACE SEEM TO REBUKE HIS ACCUSERS...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THIS MAN COULDN'T KILL ANYONE. BESIDES, WE'VE NO EVIDENCE... NO CASE AGAINST HIM!

DON'T BE FOOLED BY HIS INNOCENT FACE! HE'S A MONSTER!

I'M SORRY, BUT WITHOUT EVIDENCE, WE CAN'T BRING HIM TO COURT!

A JURY WOULD TAKE ONE LOOK AT HIS FACE AND FREE HIM!

I...I SEE...

AS FABIAN LEAVES, HE IS TRAILED BY TWO MANHUNTERS WHO ARE NOT YET CONVINCED OF HIS INNOCENCE...

LET'S KEEP AN EYE ON BABYFACE!

IT'S OPENING NIGHT AT THE OPERA. HE'S JOINING THAT FIRST-NIGHTER CROWD.

LIKE A GIGANTIC BAT WITH FLARING WINGS, THE BATMAN SCALES THE OPERA HOUSE'S FIRE ESCAPE...

THIS WILL TAKE US BACKSTAGE! WE'LL BE ABLE TO WATCH EVERYTHING FROM THERE!



THE CALL TO ACTION IS SWIFT, FOR MASKED FABIAN IS ALSO BACKSTAGE, CLAWING AT THE OPERA STAR'S PEARL NECKLACE!

AND WE'LL TAKE YOU!

I'LL TAKE THAT, CARMEN, HA, HA!

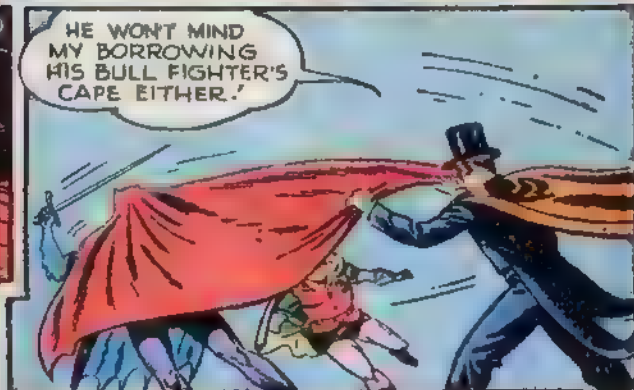


SUDDENLY, SHARP STEEL FLASHES...

OH... A SWORD CANE, EH? THE TOREADOR WON'T MIND MY BORROWING HIS ESPADA TO FENCE WITH YOU!



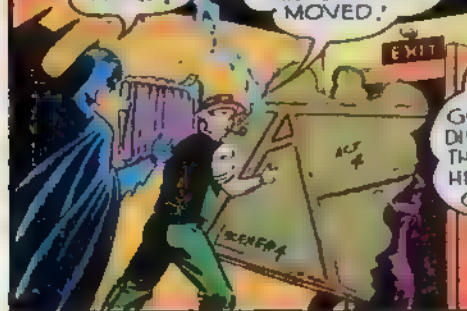
HE WON'T MIND MY BORROWING HIS BULL FIGHTER'S CAPE EITHER!



THE ENTANGLING CAPE DELAYS THEM JUST LONG ENOUGH...

DID YOU SEE A MASKED MAN RUN OUT OF HERE?

HUH? GOSH, NO! I GOT ENOUGH TO DO GETTIN' THIS SCENERY MOVED!



LATER, THEY DISCOVER HOW THE GETAWAY WAS MADE!

HMM... I WONDER IF FABIAN WAS THE BANDIT? OTHER MEN HERE TONIGHT WORE CLOTHES LIKE THIS!

LOOK... THE MASKED BANDIT'S CLOTHES! HE GOT OUT IN ANOTHER DISGUISE! GOLLY... THOSE STAGE HANDS... HE MUST'VE BEEN ONE OF THEM!



THE NEXT MORNING, FABIAN'S EYES FALL ON HIS PORTRAIT WITH GROWING HORROR...

IT'S NOT THE LIGHT! IT'S TRUE... THE PICTURE HAS CHANGED!



WHEN I KILLED MARLIN, THE MOUTH GREW CRUEL... THE EYES TURNED CUNNING! NOW, AFTER THE ROBBERY, NEW LINES OF EVIL APPEARED! YES... EVERY TIME I COMMIT A CRIME, THE PORTRAIT WILL SHOW IT—THOUGH MY OWN FACE IS UNCHANGED!



ONLY THEN DOES HE RECALL MARLIN'S LAST WORDS...



YOU MAY DECEIVE THE WORLD WITH YOUR HARMLESS FACE, BUT YOUR PORTRAIT WILL SHOW YOUR REAL SELF... YOUR EVIL SOUL! AS YOU COMMIT EVIL, YOUR PORTRAIT WILL REVEAL IT!



IN DEFIANCE OF THE PORTRAIT FABIAN COMMITS NEW CRIMES OF VIOLENCE...

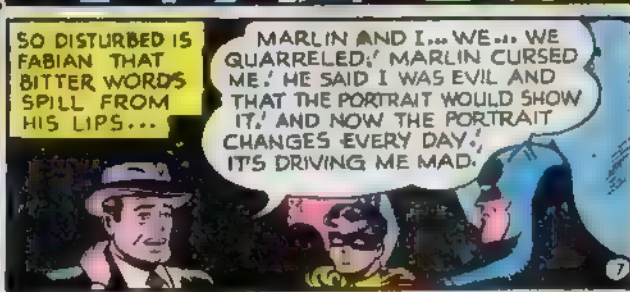
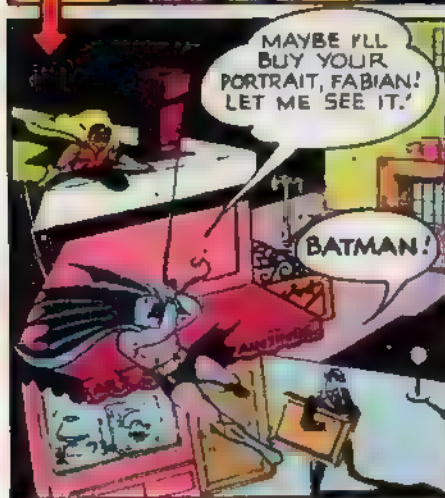
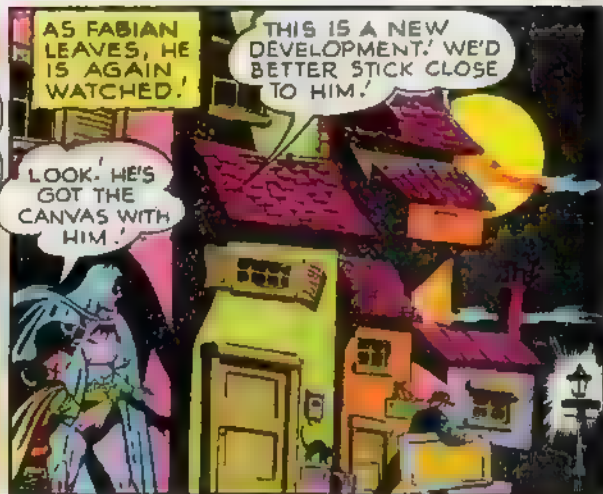


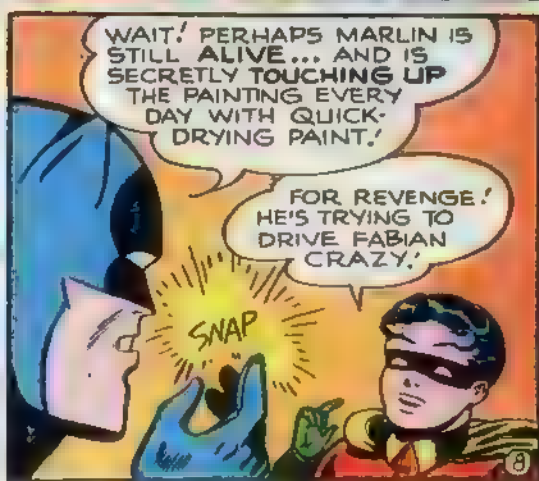
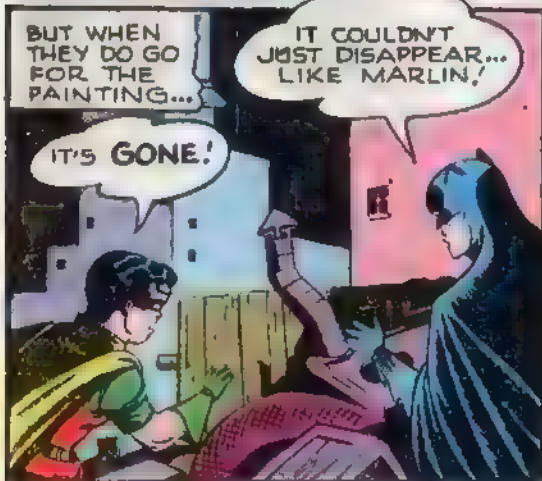
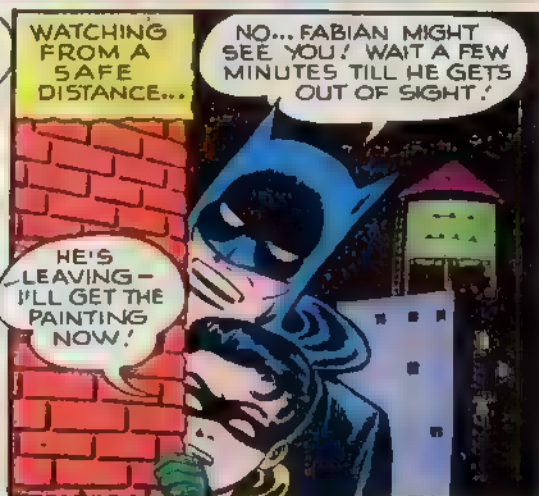
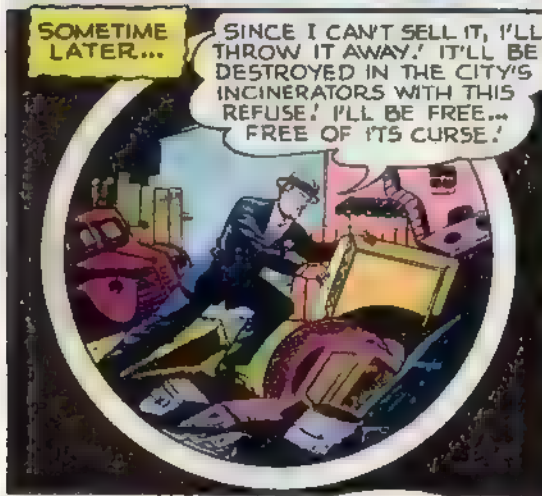
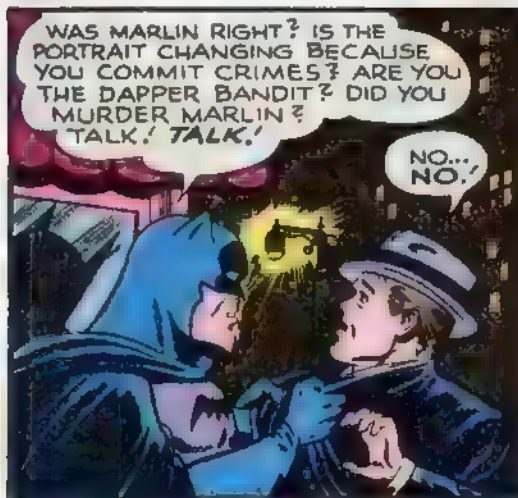
THE DAPPER BANDIT HAS GOTTEN AWAY AGAIN!

HA! HA!

AND WITH EVERY VIOLENT CRIME, MORE LINES OF EVIL SEAR THE PORTRAIT'S HIDEOUS FACE—DEPICTING GREED, HYPOCRISY, VIOLENCE!

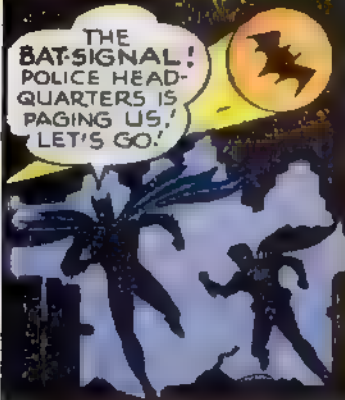






SUDDENLY, A FINGER OF LIGHT MARKS AN AWESOME SYMBOL IN THE NIGHT SKY!

THE BAT-SIGNAL! POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS IS PAGING US, LET'S GO!



AT HEADQUARTERS, THEY ARE TOLD SHOCKING NEWS!

WE JUST FISHED MARLIN'S BODY OUT OF THE RIVER! HE MUST'VE BEEN IN THERE FOR DAYS!

WHAT?!



IF MARLIN IS DEAD - THEN HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN THE CHANGING PORTRAIT?

PAINTS CAN'T COME TO LIFE! THERE MUST BE A TRICK TO THIS! LET'S QUESTION FABIAN AGAIN!



AS THEY APPROACH FABIAN'S GARRET, SUDDENLY - A SCREAM OF A SOUL IN TERROR!

EETOWN!!!

THAT CAME FROM FABIAN'S ROOM! COME ON!



LOOK... THE PORTRAIT... IT'S COME BACK!

HE'S FAINTED!



SUDDENLY BATMAN STUDIES THE FLOOR...

AH! SO I WASN'T FAR WRONG, AFTER ALL! ROBIN, IF WE WAIT, WE CAN EXPECT A VISITOR!

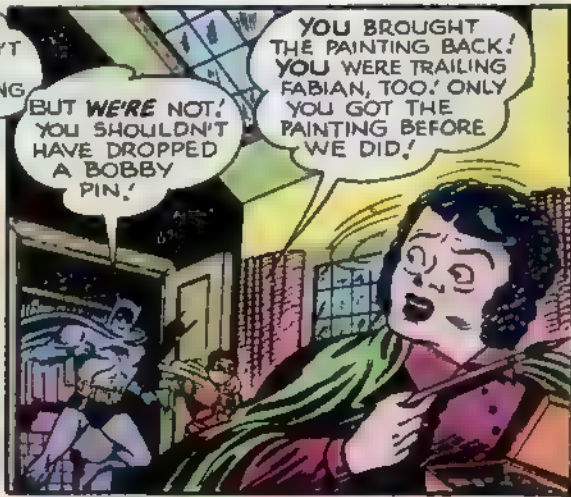


SOON AFTER...
FURTIVE FOOTSTEPS
...AND INTO THE
ROOM STEPS A
FAMILIAR FIGURE..

HE'S STILL IN A DEAD
FAINT.' GOOD.' WOULDN'T
HE BE SURPRISED TO
KNOW I'VE BEEN PAINTING
THE "CHANGES" ON
HIS PORTRAIT
EVERY DAY!

BUT WE'RE NOT!
YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE DROPPED
A BOBBY
PIN!

YOU BROUGHT
THE PAINTING BACK!
YOU WERE TRAILING
FABIAN, TOO! ONLY
YOU GOT THE
PAINTING BEFORE
WE DID!

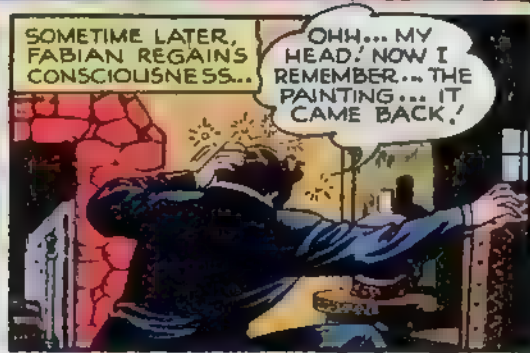
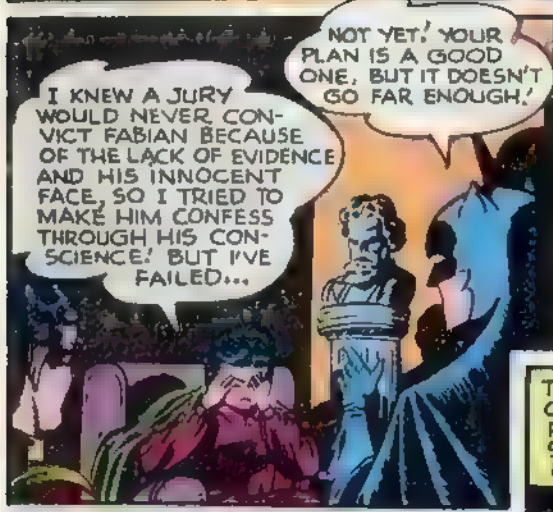


I KNEW A JURY
WOULD NEVER CONVICT
FABIAN BECAUSE
OF THE LACK OF EVIDENCE
AND HIS INNOCENT
FACE, SO I TRIED TO
MAKE HIM CONFESS
THROUGH HIS CON-
SCIENCE! BUT I'VE
FAILED...

NOT YET! YOUR
PLAN IS A GOOD
ONE, BUT IT DOESN'T
GO FAR ENOUGH!

SOMETIME LATER,
FABIAN REGAINS
CONSCIOUSNESS...

OH... MY
HEAD! NOW I
REMEMBER... THE
PAINTING... IT
CAME BACK!

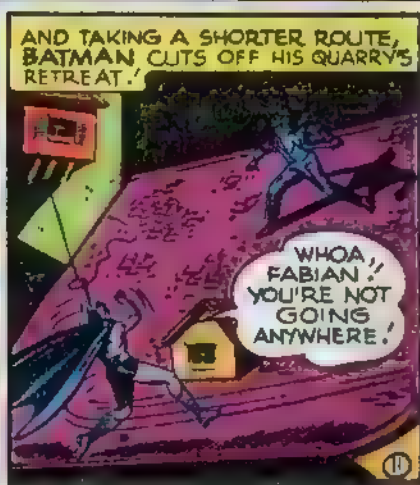
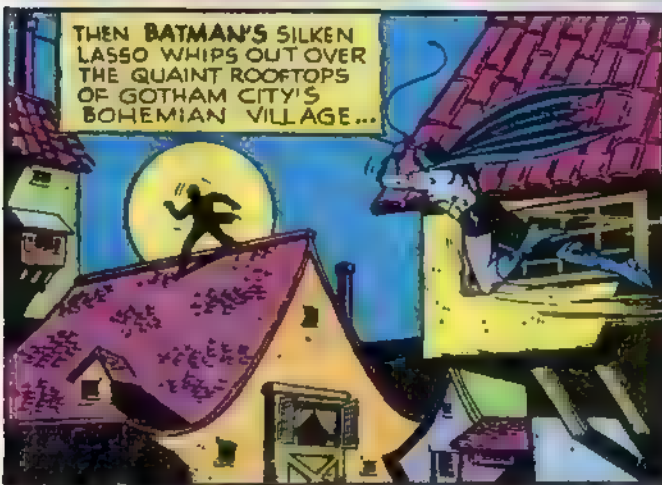
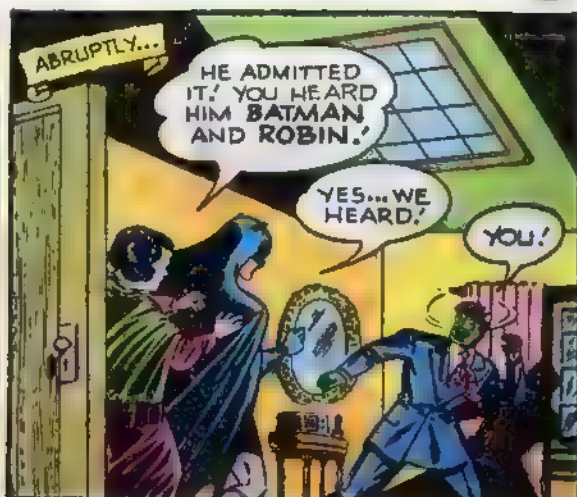


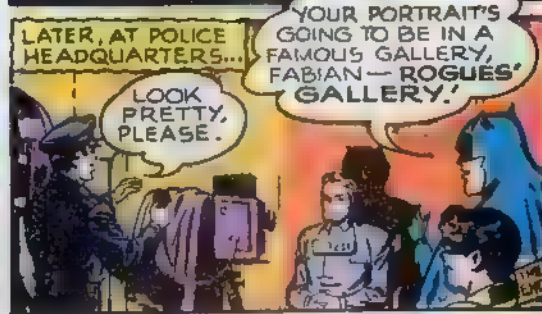
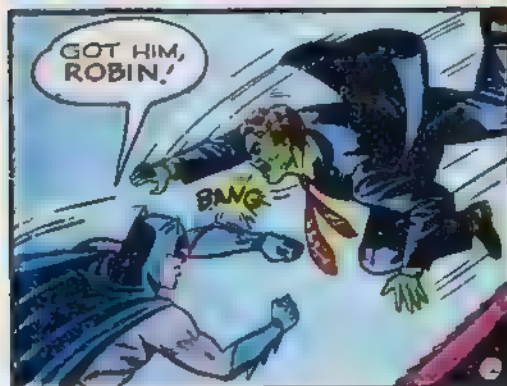
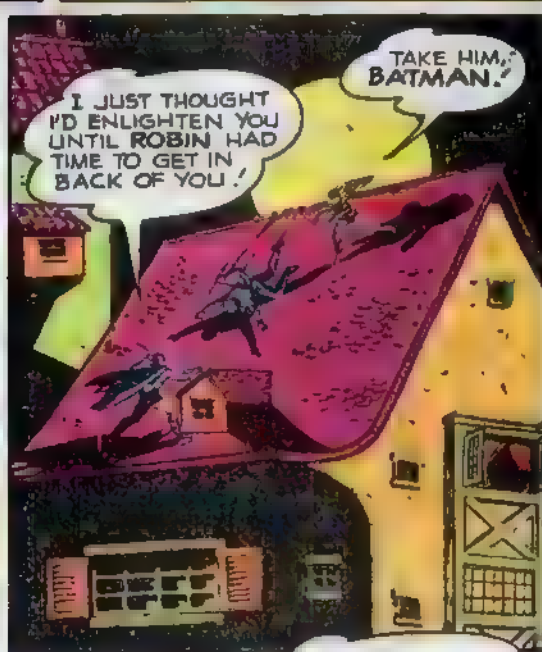
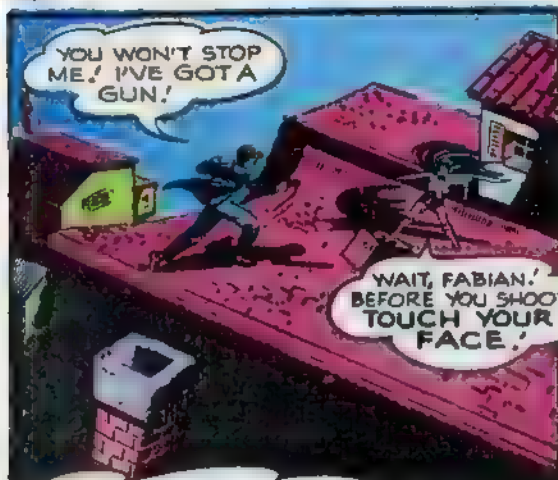
THEN WITH A CRY
OF AGONY, FABIAN
RECOILS AS HE
SEES HIS OWN FACE
IN THE MIRROR!

AGGHHH!
MY FACE... MY-FACE!
THE EVIL HAS GONE
FROM THE PORTRAIT'S
FACE TO MY OWN
FACE!

WHAT..?
THE PORTRAIT...
IT'S LIKE IT
USED TO BE!







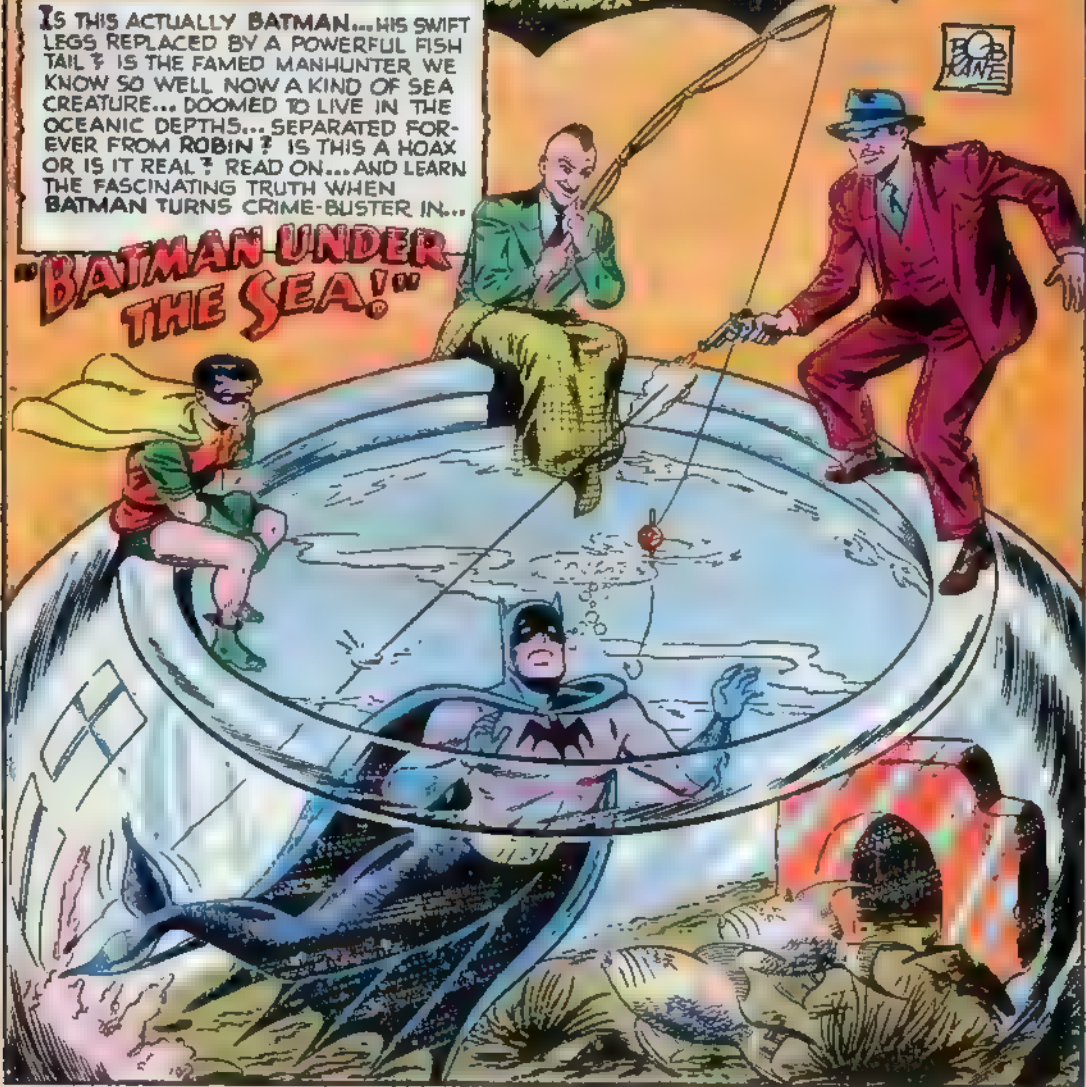
BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN

BOY WONDER -

IS THIS ACTUALLY BATMAN... HIS SWIFT LEGS REPLACED BY A POWERFUL FISH TAIL? IS THE FAMED MANHUNTER WE KNOW SO WELL NOW A KIND OF SEA CREATURE... DOOMED TO LIVE IN THE OCEANIC DEPTHS... SEPARATED FOREVER FROM ROBIN? IS THIS A HOAX OR IS IT REAL? READ ON... AND LEARN THE FASCINATING TRUTH WHEN BATMAN TURNS CRIME-BUSTER IN...

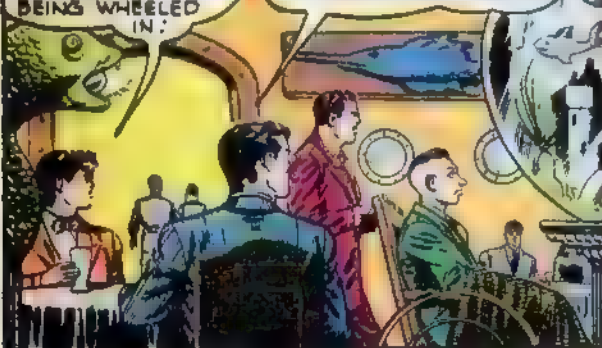
"BATMAN UNDER THE SEA!"



ONE AFTERNOON AS BRUCE (BATMAN) WAYNE AND HIS YOUNG WARD, DICK (ROBIN) GRAYSON DINE AT THE HOTEL DOLPHIN, FAMED FOR ITS SEA FOOD...

BRUCE, LOOK AT THE ODD FACE OF THAT PARALYZED MAN BEING WHEELED IN:

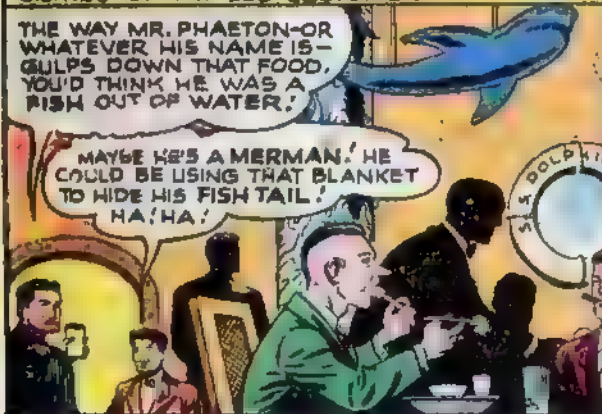
HMM, HE DOES HAVE QUEER FEATURES, DICK! ALMOST LIKE A FISH...



THEIR MINDS TRAINED TO SEEK OUT CLUES, BRUCE AND DICK AMUSE THEMSELVES BY EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE ODD CUSTOMER...

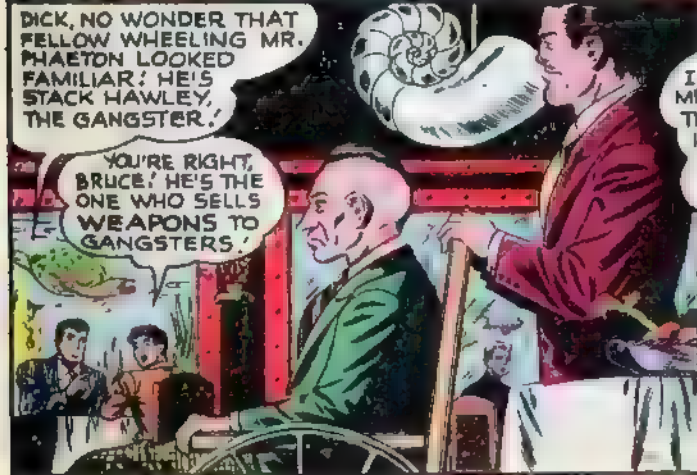
THE WAY MR. PHAETON-OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS-GULPS DOWN THAT FOOD, YOU'D THINK HE WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER.

MAYBE HE'S A MERMAN! HE COULD BE USING THAT BLANKET TO HIDE HIS FISH TAIL! HA! HA!



DICK, NO WONDER THAT FELLOW WHEELING MR. PHAETON LOOKED FAMILIAR! HE'S STACK HAWLEY, THE GANGSTER!

YOU'RE RIGHT, BRUCE! HE'S THE ONE WHO SELLS WEAPONS TO GANGSTERS!



SALT WATER, SIR? ARE YOU SURE-?

WAITER, I WANT A BIG PLATE OF SHRIMP...OYSTERS...AND CLAMS! AND BRING ME A GLASS OF SALT WATER!

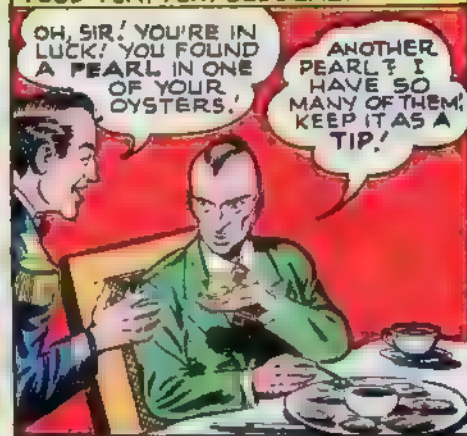
YOU HEARD MR. PHAETON! HE WANTS A DRINK O' SALT WATER!



THEN, AS THE MAN FINISHES HIS SEA-FOOD PLATTER, SUDDENLY...

OH, SIR! YOU'RE IN LUCK! YOU FOUND A PEARL IN ONE OF YOUR OYSTERS!

ANOTHER PEARL? I HAVE SO MANY OF THEM, KEEP IT AS A TIP!



SWIFTLY, BRUCE QUESTIONS THE WAITER ABOUT MR. PHAETON...

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIM, MR. WAYNE-NOBODY DOES, EXCEPT THAT HIS LEGS ARE PARALYZED... HE LIVES IN THIS HOTEL WHENEVER HE'S IN TOWN...AND HE INSISTS ON SEA WATER FOR HIS BATHS!





HE DRINKS SALT WATER AND BATHES IN SEA WATER! I'M ALMOST BEGINNING TO BELIEVE HE IS A MERMAN!

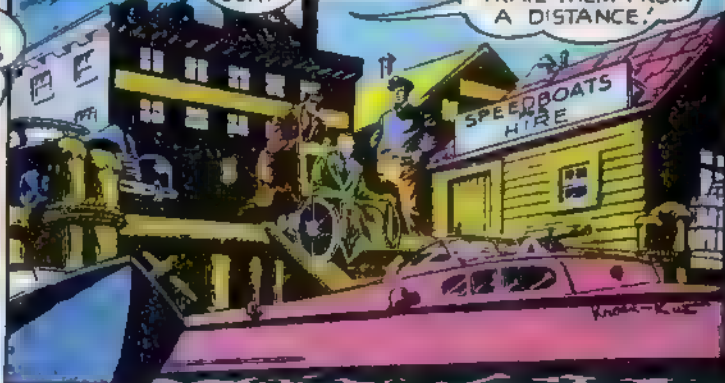
DON'T LET YOUR FANTASTIC IMAGINATION RUN AWAY WITH YOU! WHAT PUZZLES ME IS WHY STACK IS WORKING FOR PHAETON!



THAT NIGHT, AS MR. PHAETON IS WHEELED FROM THE HOTEL, HE IS WATCHED BY TWO CAPED MANHUNTERS - BATMAN AND ROBIN.

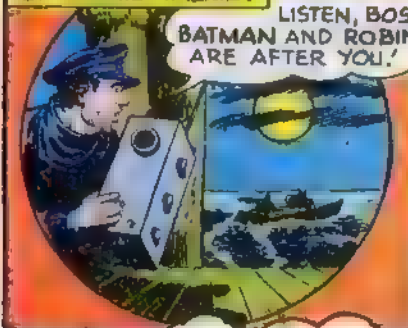
HE'S BEING WHEELED INTO THAT SPEED-BOAT!

WE'LL HIRE A BOAT AND TRAIL THEM FROM A DISTANCE.



BUT THE MAN WHO RENTS THE SPEEDBOATS IS IN PHAETON'S PAY AND QUICKLY CONTACTS HIS BOSS BY WALKIE-TALKIE!

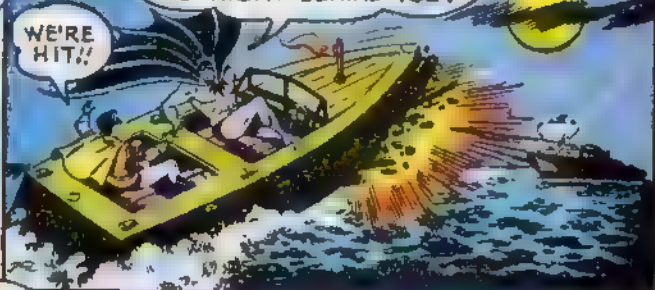
LISTEN, BOSS! BATMAN AND ROBIN ARE AFTER YOU!



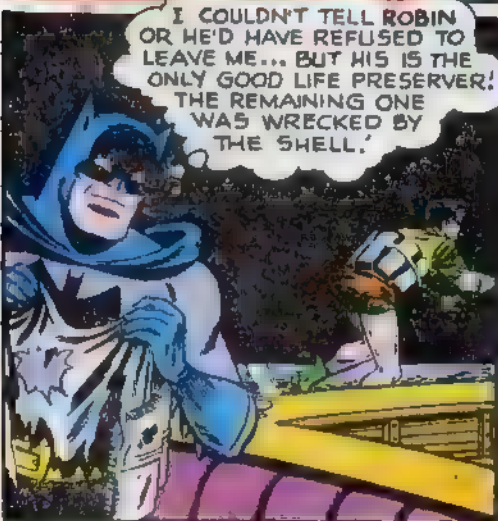
SOON AFTER, AT PHAETON'S COMMAND, A DECK GUN THUNDERS, HURLING A SHELL THROUGH THE BATMAN'S BOAT!

GRAB THAT LIFE PRESERVER AND JUMP OVERBOARD! I'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

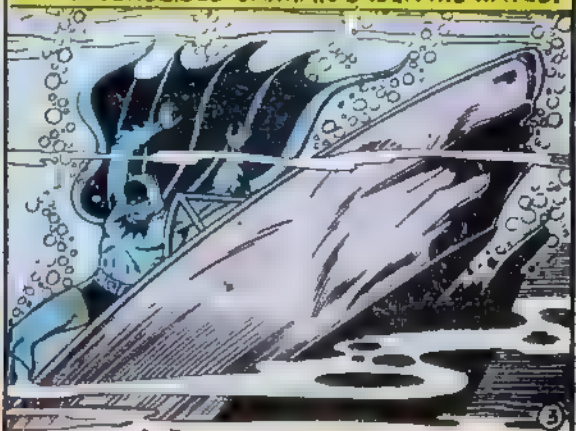
WE'RE HIT!!



I COULDN'T TELL ROBIN OR HE'D HAVE REFUSED TO LEAVE ME... BUT HIS IS THE ONLY GOOD LIFE PRESERVER! THE REMAINING ONE WAS WRECKED BY THE SHELL.



SUDDENLY, ANOTHER SHELL BLUDGEONS THE CRAFT AND THE BOAT BEGINS TO SINK, DRAWING THE UNCONSCIOUS BATMAN UNDER THE WAVES!



AFTER WHAT SEEMS HOURS LATER...

HE'S RE-GAINING CONSCIOUSNESS!

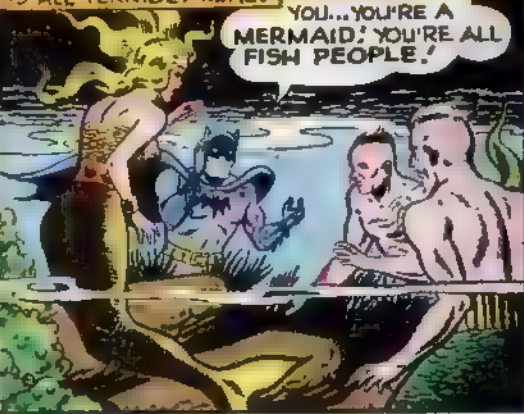
OH...WHAT...MY COWL...PULLED BACK! STRANGERS LOOKING AT MY FACE!

DON'T WORRY, BATMAN... YOUR SECRET IDENTITY IS SAFE WITH US!



SUDDENLY BATMAN STARES WILD-EYED, DISBELIEVING WHAT HE SEES, YET SOMEHOW KNOWING IT IS ALL TERRIBLY REAL.

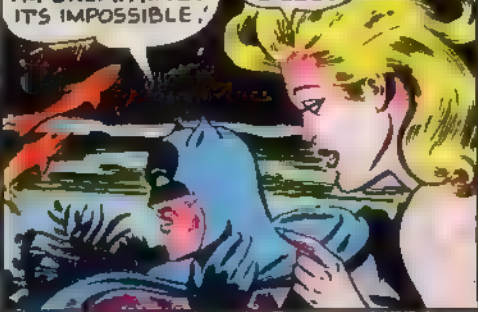
YOU...YOU'RE A MERMAID! YOU'RE ALL FISH PEOPLE!



THEN BATMAN IS AWARE OF A NEW SENSATION!

I'M BREATHING! I'M UNDER WATER...YET I'M BREATHING! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

OH, YES, IT'S POSSIBLE—BECAUSE I, THETA OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL, OPERATED ON YOU AND GAVE YOU GILLS!



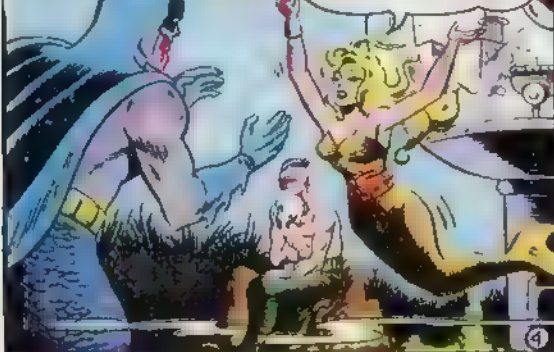
PRESENTLY, WHEN BATMAN TRIES TO STRUGGLE TO HIS FEET IN PROTEST.

MY LEGS! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY LEGS! THEY'RE GONE; IN THEIR PLACE—A TAIL! WHERE ARE MY LEGS?

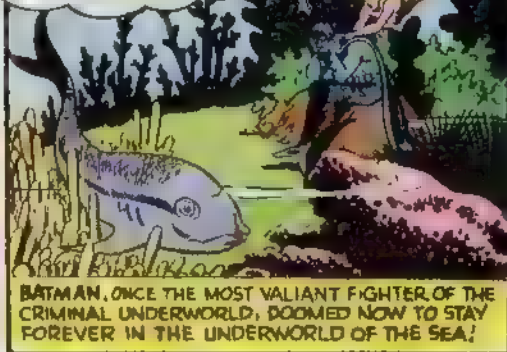


GIVE ME BACK MY LEGS!

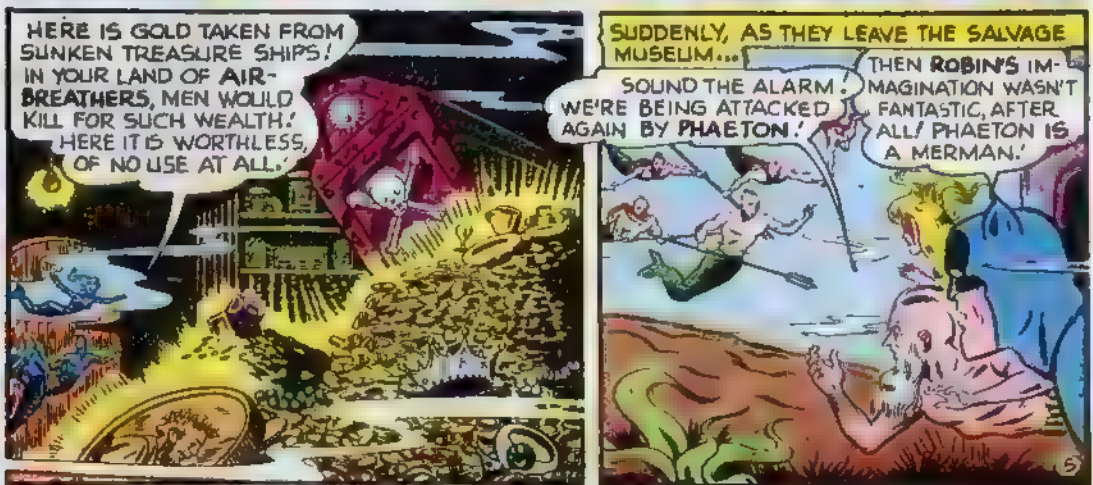
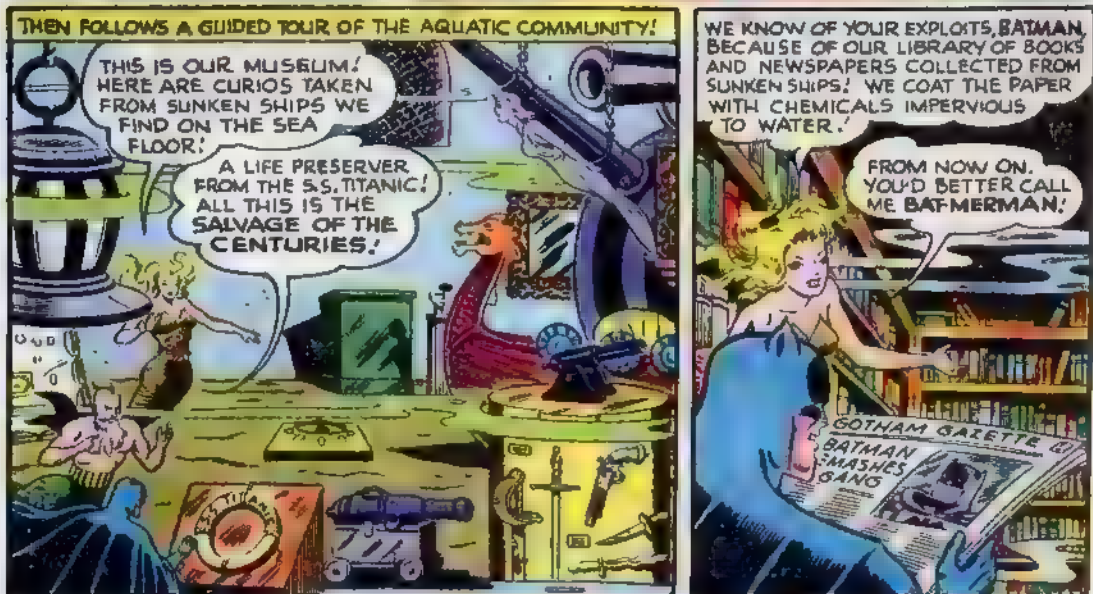
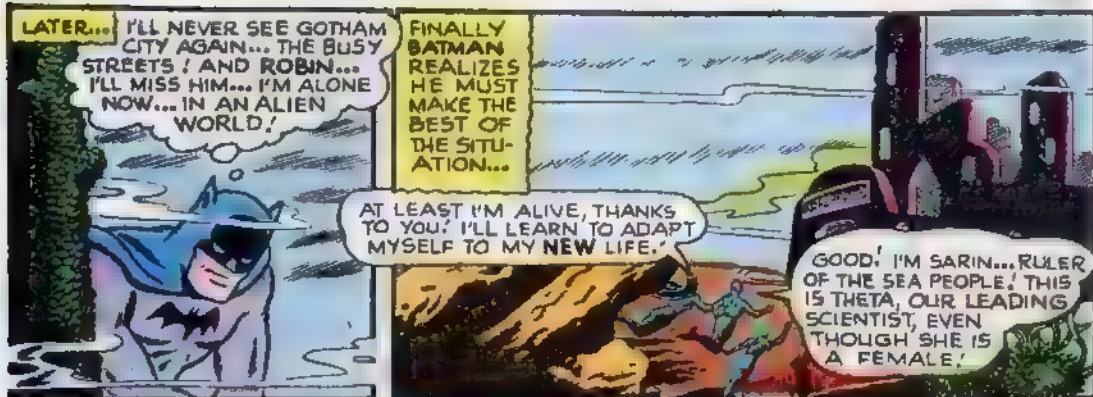
YOU WERE DROWNING! WE JUST HAD TO PLACE YOU IN THE CONVERTING CHAMBER AND GIVE YOU GILLS AND A TAIL! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IF WE HADN'T OPERATED, YOU'D HAVE DIED!



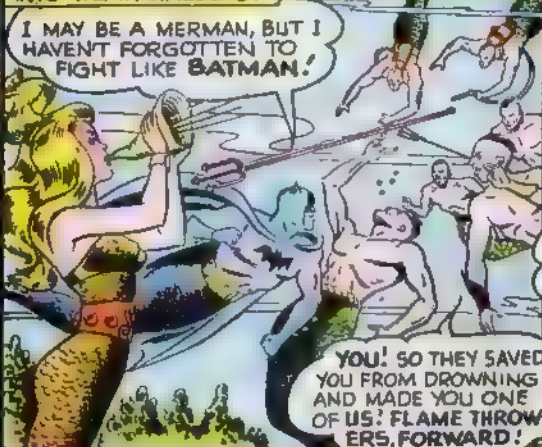
I'M SORRY, BUT YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE HERE! THE SEA WILL BE YOUR HOME FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE! YOU'RE A MERMAN NOW!



BATMAN, ONCE THE MOST VALIANT FIGHTER OF THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD, DOOMED NOW TO STAY FOREVER IN THE UNDERWORLD OF THE SEA!

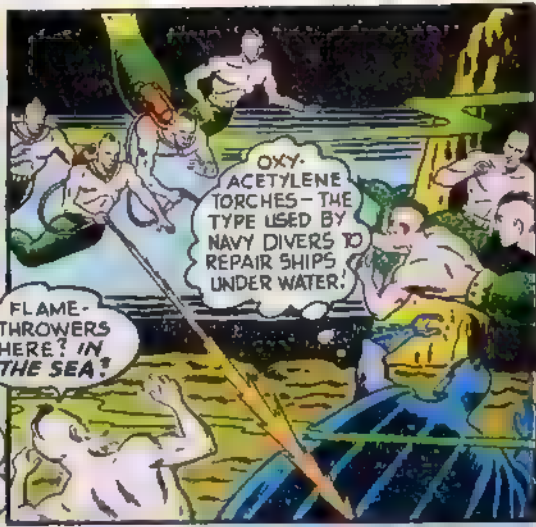


EVEN AS THE CLARION CALL TO ARMS SOUNDS, A FLIP OF BAT-MERMAN'S POWERFUL TAIL HURTTLES HIM INTO THE MARAUDERS!



I MAY BE A MERMAN, BUT I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN TO FIGHT LIKE BATMAN!

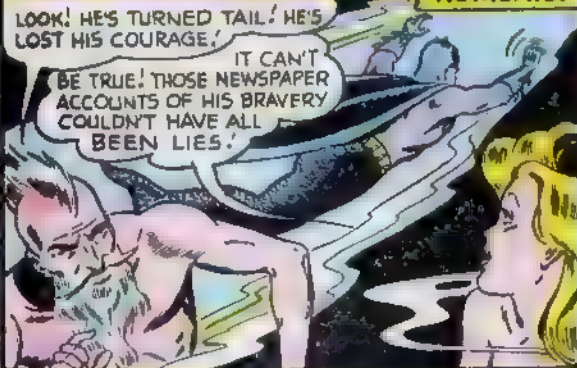
YOU! SO THEY SAVED YOU FROM DROWNING AND MADE YOU ONE OF US? FLAME THROWERS, FORWARD!



FLAME-THROWERS HERE? IN THE SEA!

OXY-ACETYLENE TORCHES - THE TYPE USED BY NAVY DIVERS TO REPAIR SHIPS UNDER WATER.

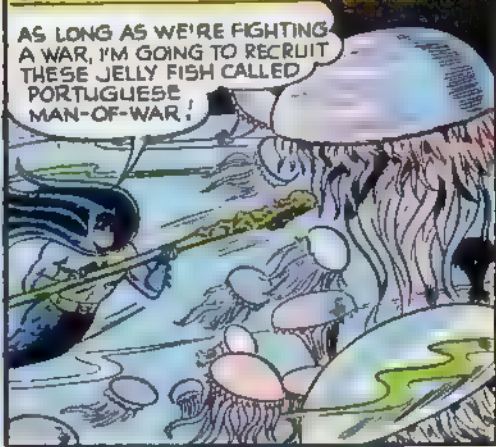
THEN BAT-MERMAN DOES A STRANGE THING ... HE **RETREATS!**



LOOK! HE'S TURNED TAIL! HE'S LOST HIS COURAGE!

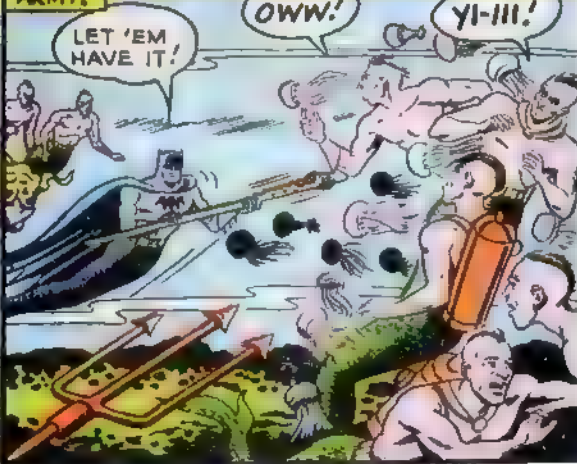
IT CAN'T BE TRUE! THOSE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF HIS BRAVERY COULDN'T HAVE ALL BEEN LIES!

BUT BAT-MERMAN'S RETREAT IS ONLY **BATTLE STRATEGY, FOR...**



AS LONG AS WE'RE FIGHTING A WAR, I'M GOING TO RECRUIT THESE JELLY FISH CALLED PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR!

PRODDED FORWARD, THE JELLY FISH FURIOUSLY WHIP THEIR TENTACLES ABOUT IN THE RANKS OF PHAETON'S ARMY!

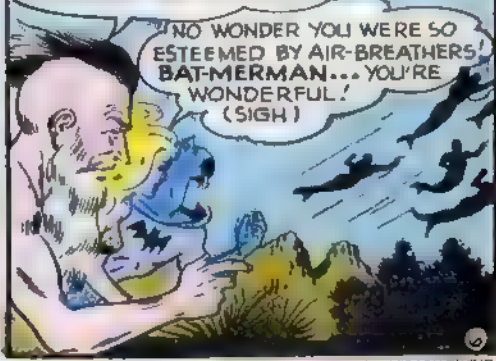


LET 'EM HAVE IT!

OWW!

YI-III!

THEY'RE WITHDRAWING! WE'VE WON... AND ALL BECAUSE YOU WERE CLEVER ENOUGH TO PROD THE JELLY FISH WITH THEIR STINGING TENTACLES!



NO WONDER YOU WERE SO ESTEEMED BY AIR-BREATHERS! BAT-MERMAN... YOU'RE WONDERFUL! (SIGH)

WHEN BAT-MERMAN EXPLAINS ABOUT PHAETON'S LAND ACTIVITIES...

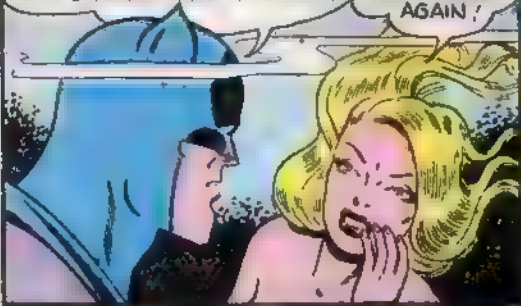
PHAETON IS A RENEGADE SCIENTIST! I'VE LEARNED HOW TO CHANGE LAND MEN INTO MERMEN... BUT OBVIOUSLY HE KNOWS THE SECRET OF DOING THE REVERSE!

THEN WHY HASN'T HE LEFT? WHY HAS HE REMAINED A MERMAN?



I THINK HE'S BEEN BUYING WEAPONS FROM STACK HAWLEY SO HE CAN RAID YOUR MUSEUM! HE WANTS THE GOLD AND PEARLS SO HE CAN LIVE ON LAND IN LUXURY!

BUT HE DIDN'T GET THE TREASURE. THAT MEANS HE'LL ATTACK AGAIN!



AND PHAETON'S ATTACK COMES THAT VERY INSTANT, WITH ANOTHER WEAPON PURCHASED FROM STACK HAWLEY—DEPTH CHARGES!

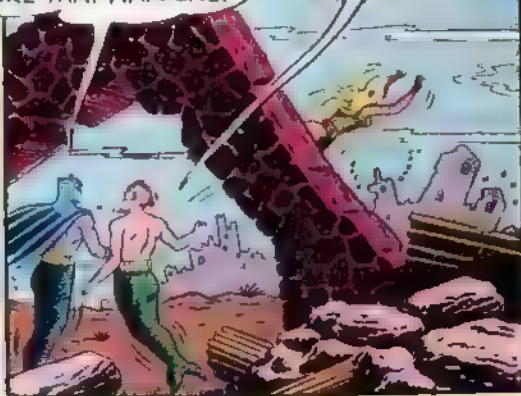
OH... THE CONCUSSION!



AFTERWARD, CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS, BUT THE TREASURE IS GONE!

NOW THAT HE HAS THE TREASURE, HE'LL BE READY TO CONVERT HIMSELF INTO A LAND MAN! WE MUST FIND HIS HIDEOUT BEFORE THAT HAPPENS!

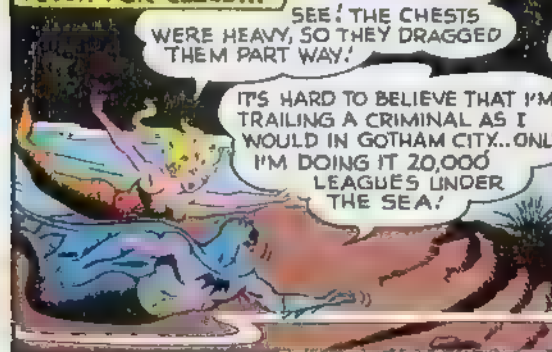
WE'LL FORM SEARCHING PARTIES. IF I FIND A CLUE, I'LL SIGNAL YOU!



LATER... THETA AND BAT-MAN SCAN THE SEA FLOOR FOR CLUES...

SEE! THE CHESTS WERE HEAVY, SO THEY DRAGGED THEM PART WAY!

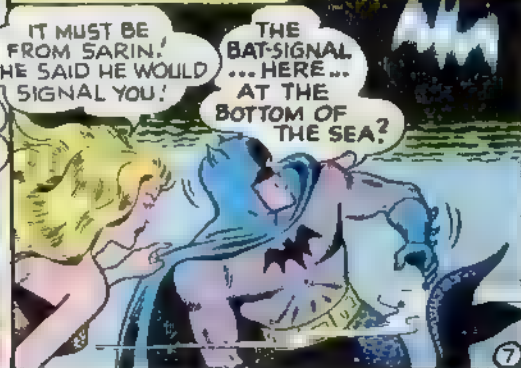
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT I'M TRAILING A CRIMINAL AS I WOULD IN GOTHAM CITY... ONLY I'M DOING IT 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA!



SUDDENLY, UNBELIEVINGLY... AN EERIE LUMINESCENCE FLASHES A FAMILIAR SYMBOL INTO THE OCEANIC "SKY"!

IT MUST BE FROM SARIN! HE SAID HE WOULD SIGNAL YOU!

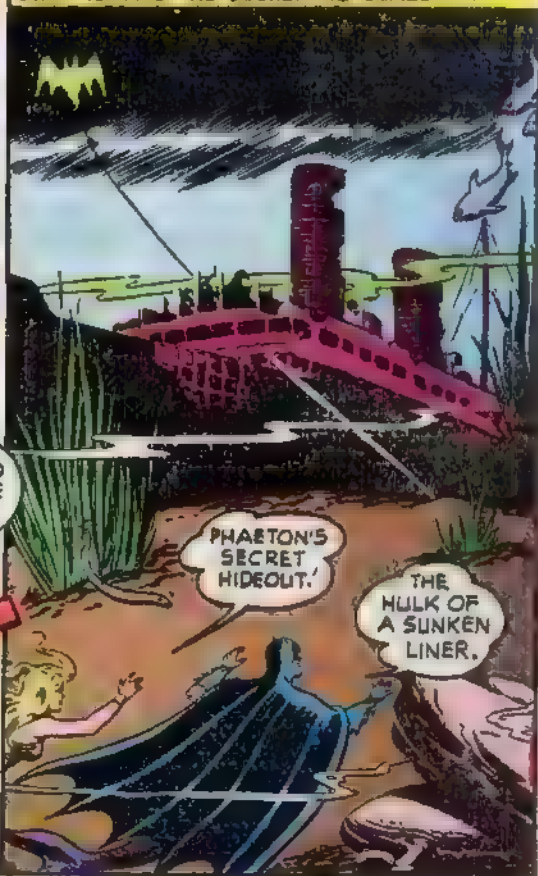
THE BAT-SIGNAL... HERE... AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA?



THE ANSWER—LUMINOUS FISH, GROUPED TOGETHER ON A WIRE FRAME SO THEIR LIGHT "BATTERIES" FORM THE SHAPE OF A BAT.



SWIFTLY, THE BAT-MERMAN AND THE MERMAID SWIM TOWARD THE BECKONING BEACON...

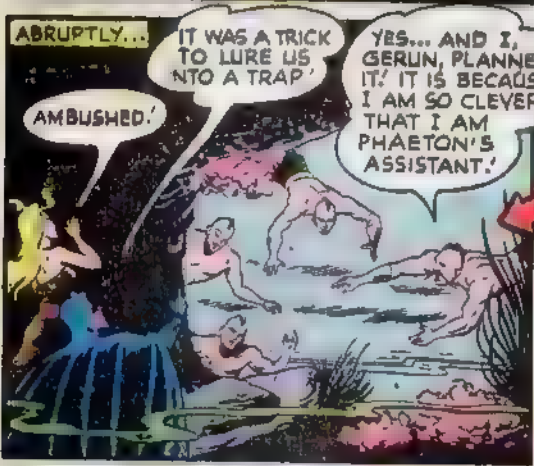


ABRUPTLY...

IT WAS A TRICK TO LURE US INTO A TRAP!

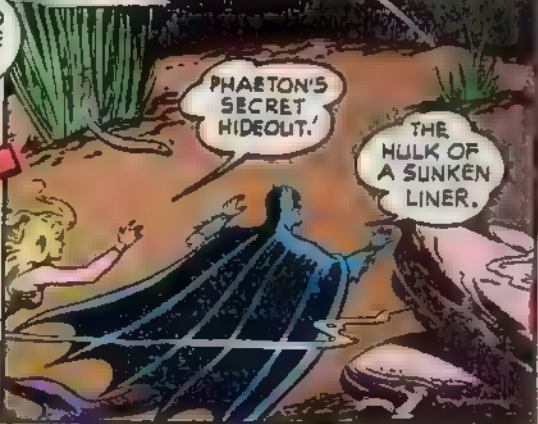
AMBUSHED!

YES... AND I, GERUN, PLANNED IT! IT IS BECAUSE I AM SO CLEVER THAT I AM PHAETON'S ASSISTANT!



PHAETON'S SECRET HIDEOUT!

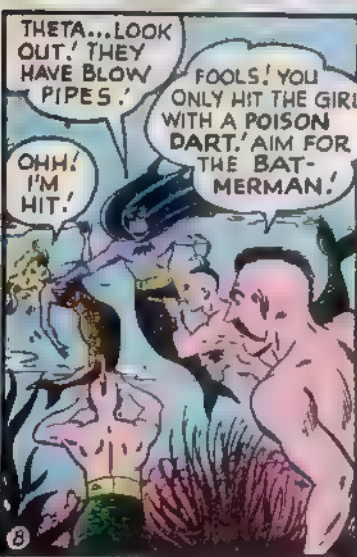
THE HULK OF A SUNKEN LINER.



THETA...LOOK OUT! THEY HAVE BLOW PIPES!

FOOLS! YOU ONLY HIT THE GIRL WITH A POISON DART, AIM FOR THE BAT-MERMAN!

OH! I'M HIT!



VENGEFULLY, BAT-MERMAN LASHES AT THE KILLERS, HIS POWERFUL FISTS AND TAIL WHIPPING THEM MERCILESSLY!

YOU ROTTEN MURDERERS!

MY ARM—IT'S BROKEN!

YII! HE FIGHTS WITH THE FURY OF A TIGER SHARK!

THWACK



FEARFULLY, PHAETON'S MEN FLEE.

IT'S TOO LATE! THE POISON WILL KILL ME SOON!

YOU'VE STILL GOT A CHANCE—IF I CAN FIND A SEA STAR!

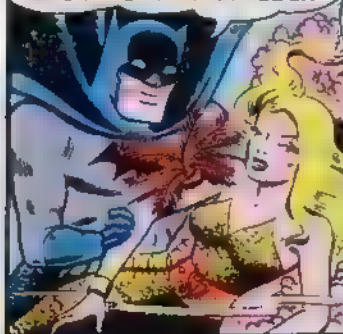


HAS THE BAT-MERMAN LOST HIS MIND? HOW CAN A SEA STAR SAVE THETA'S LIFE?



BAT-MERMAN RETURNS SHORTLY, GINGERLY CARRYING A SPINY CREATURE WHOSE MOUTH HE PLACES AGAINST THE WOUNDED SHOULDER...

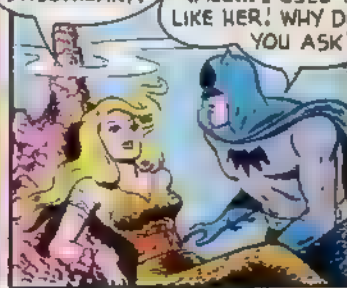
THIS IS A SEA STAR... A RELATION OF THE COMMON STAR FISH! PEARL DIVERS USE IT AS A LEECH!



WHEN THE POISON IS DRAWN OUT AND THE WOUND BANDAGED, THETA LOOKS AT BAT-MERMAN WITH GLOWING EYES...

UH... IN YOUR SURFACE WORLD, WERE... WERE YOU EVER IN LOVE? DID... DID YOU HAVE A SWEETHEART?

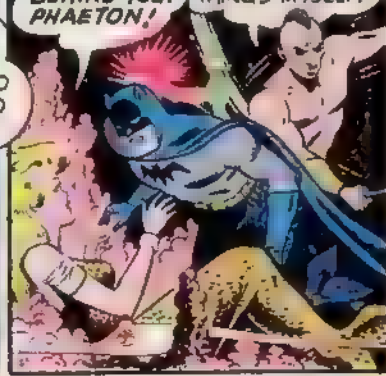
NO... BUT THERE WAS A GIRL... VICKI VALE... I USED TO LIKE HER! WHY DO YOU ASK?



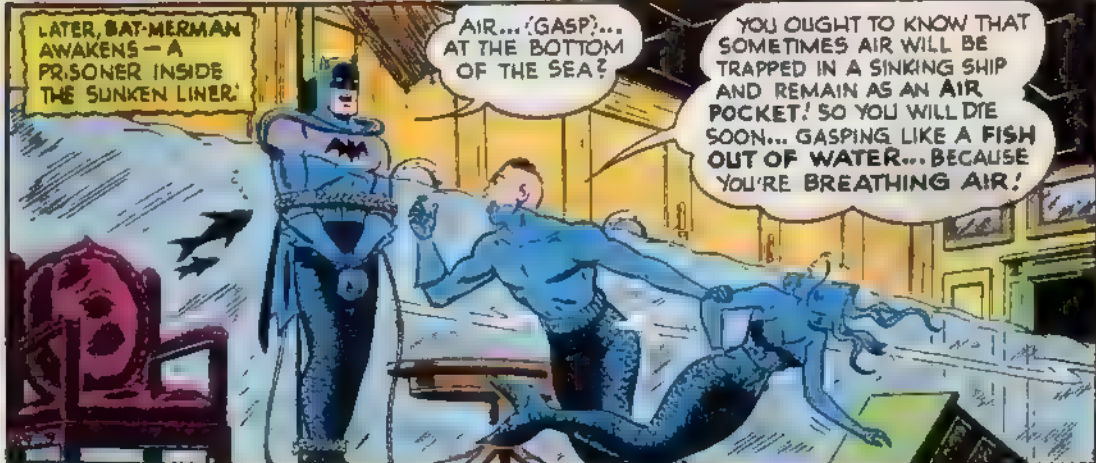
BUT THE QUESTION MUST REMAIN UNANSWERED FOR, SUDDENLY...

BAT-MERMAN... BEHIND YOU! PHAETON!

GERUN BUNGLED THE JOB! I ALWAYS FIND I MUST DO THINGS MYSELF!



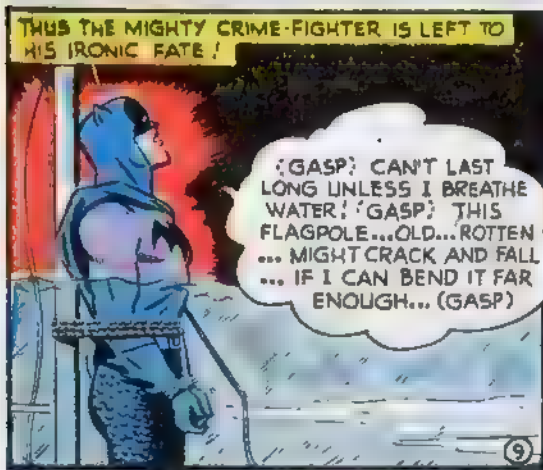
LATER, BAT-MERMAN AWAKENS - A PRISONER INSIDE THE SUNKEN LINER!



AIR... (GASP)... AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA?

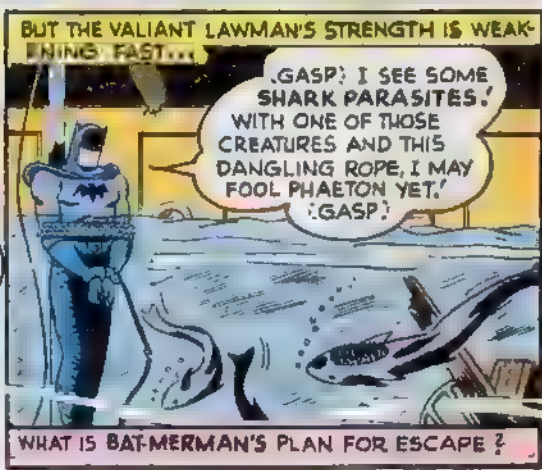
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THAT SOMETIMES AIR WILL BE TRAPPED IN A SINKING SHIP AND REMAIN AS AN AIR POCKET! SO YOU WILL DIE SOON... GASPING LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER... BECAUSE YOU'RE BREATHING AIR!

THUS THE MIGHTY CRIME-FIGHTER IS LEFT TO HIS IRONIC FATE!



(GASP) CAN'T LAST LONG UNLESS I BREATHE WATER! (GASP) THIS FLAGPOLE... OLD... ROTTEN ... MIGHT CRACK AND FALL ... IF I CAN BEND IT FAR ENOUGH... (GASP)

BUT THE VALIANT LAWMAN'S STRENGTH IS WEAKENING FAST...



(GASP) I SEE SOME SHARK PARASITES! WITH ONE OF THOSE CREATURES AND THIS DANGLING ROPE, I MAY FOOL PHAETON YET! (GASP)

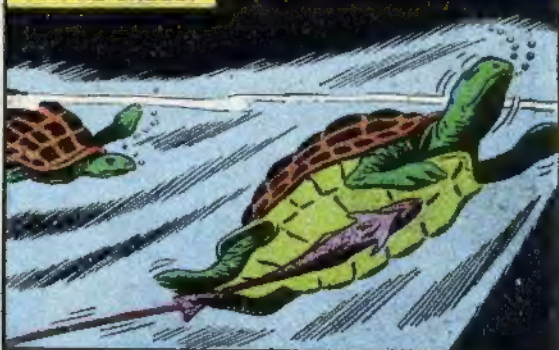
WHAT IS BAT-MERMAN'S PLAN FOR ESCAPE?

AS ONE CURIOUS FISH IDLES NEAR HIS HAND, BAT-MERMAN GRABS HIM, SOON KNOTS THE ROPE ABOUT HIS TAIL, AND...

IT'S HEADING TOWARD THOSE TURTLES! (GASP) LUCKILY THERE ARE NO SHARKS ABOUT! (GASP) SHARK PARASITES PREFER THEM!



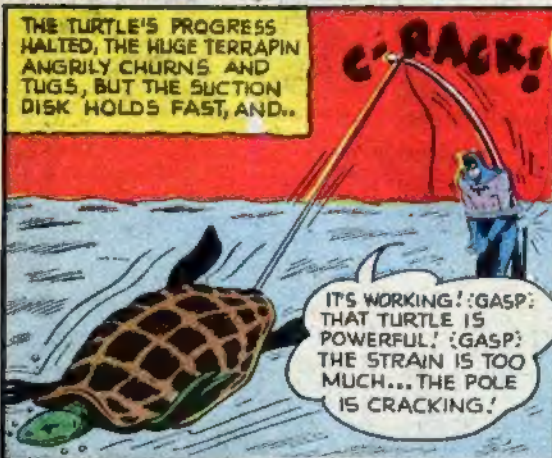
LOOKING FOR A PLACE OF SAFETY, THE PARASITE FISH ATTACHES ITS AMAZING SUCTION DISK TO A TURTLE SHELL!



THE TURTLE'S PROGRESS HALTED, THE HUGE TERRAPIN ANGRILY CHURNS AND TUGS, BUT THE SUCTION DISK HOLDS FAST, AND...

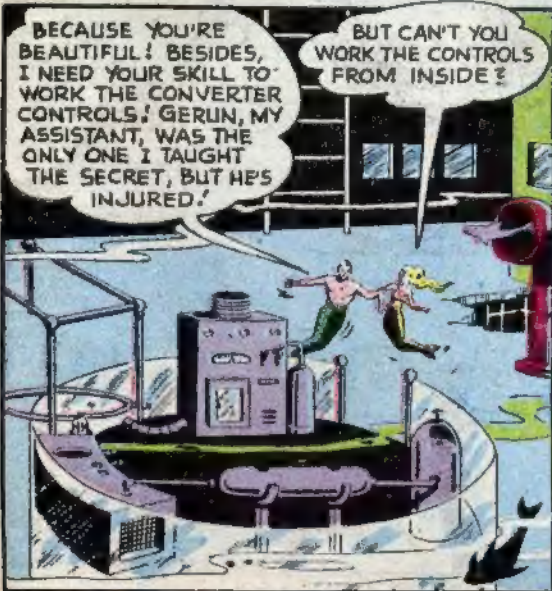
CRACK!

IT'S WORKING! (GASP) THAT TURTLE IS POWERFUL! (GASP) THE STRAIN IS TOO MUCH... THE POLE IS CRACKING!



BECAUSE YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL! BESIDES, I NEED YOUR SKILL TO WORK THE CONVERTER CONTROLS! GERUN, MY ASSISTANT, WAS THE ONLY ONE I TAUGHT THE SECRET, BUT HE'S INJURED.

BUT CAN'T YOU WORK THE CONTROLS FROM INSIDE?



ELSEWHERE, ON THE DECK OF THE HULK...

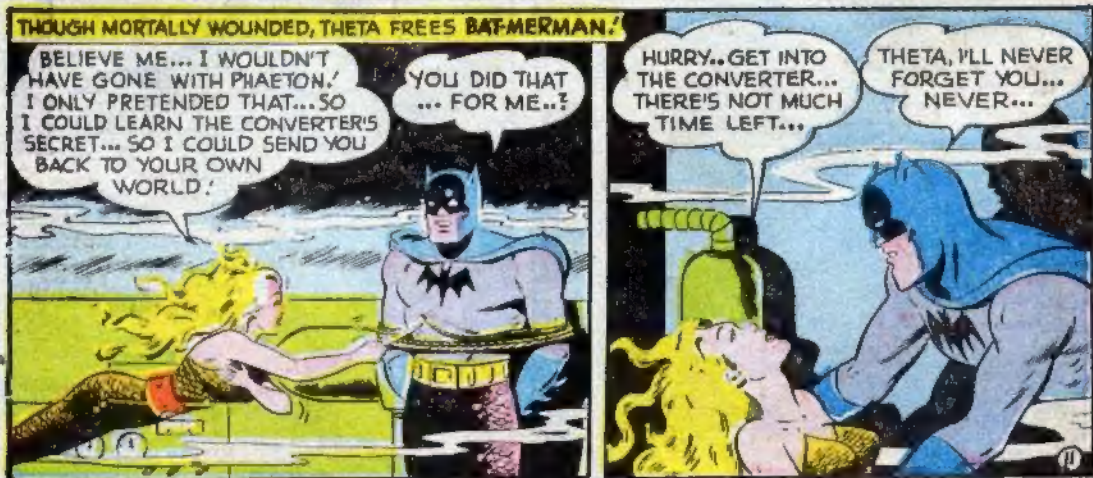
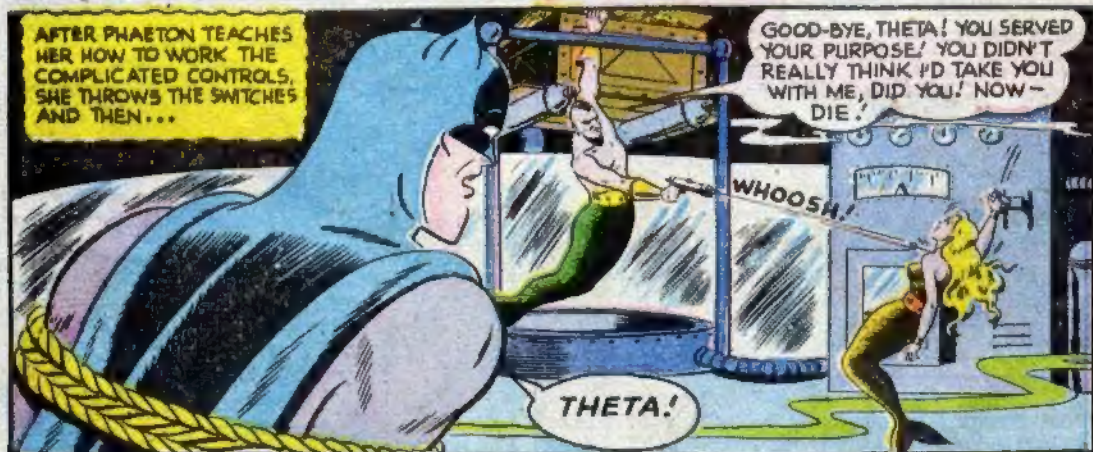
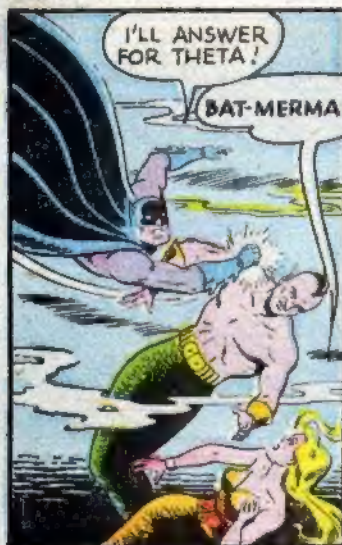
LOOK, THETA... GOLD... PEARLS! ON THE SURFACE THEY ARE A MEASURE OF WEALTH! THEY BUY SERVANTS, LUXURIES! YOU CAN SHARE ALL THAT WITH ME... AS MY WIFE!

YOU'RE PROPOSING TO ME? WHY?



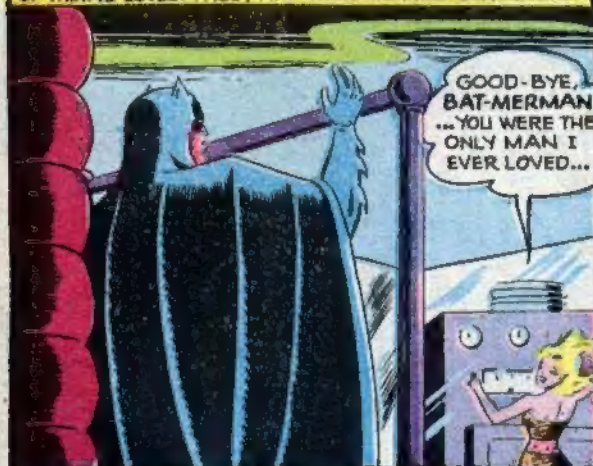
I COULD, IF MY HANDS WERE FREE, BUT I'LL BE HOLDING THE TREASURE CHEST! SO, AFTER SENDING ME UP FIRST, YOU CAN FOLLOW! THEN WE'LL LIVE LIKE A KING AND QUEEN. WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?







INSIDE THE CONVERTER, BAT-MERMAN HAS HIS LAST GLIMPSE OF THEA'S LOVELY FACE, AND THEN—ROARING BLACKNESS!



GOOD-BYE, BAT-MERMAN... YOU WERE THE ONLY MAN I EVER LOVED...

AND WHEN BATMAN AWAKENS—ROBIN IS BENDING OVER HIM!



ROBIN... I'M HOME AGAIN... IN BED! BUT I SHOULD BE IN THE WATER...

THE COAST GUARD FISHED YOU OUT OF THE WATER HOURS AGO! BUT YOU'VE BEEN DELIRIOUS FOR HOURS! YOU HIT YOUR HEAD ON THE BOAT'S BOW!

BEWILDERED, BATMAN RELATES HIS STORY...



BUT THAT'S CRAZY... FANTASTIC! IT'S YOUR DELIRIUM, I TELL YOU!

PERHAPS! I'LL KNOW AFTER WE GET BACK TO THE HOTEL DOLPHIN AND GET PHAETON!

BOON AFTER, THE CRIME-BUSTERS CRASH INTO A HOTEL ROOM...



BATMAN... ALIVE!

OUR DECK GUN DIDN'T GET YOU, BUT THIS GUN WILL...

NO SECOND TRIES, STACK!

SEE? NO FISH TAIL... NO GILL MARKS BEHIND THE EARS!

IT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY PHAETON DRINKS SALT WATER... AND USES SEA WATER IN HIS TUB!

I HAVE A SALT DEFICIENCY! AND I'VE BEEN TOLD SEA WATER IS GOOD FOR WEAK LEGS!



THEN, AFTER INVESTIGATION, ANOTHER MYSTERY IS EXPLAINED...

NOW YOU KNOW WHY PHAETON HAS SO MANY PEARLS. IT'S BECAUSE HE'S IN THE GEM-SMUGGLING RACKET AND STACK IS HIS PARTNER!

YES... EVERYTHING FITS... YET...



IF PHAETON REALLY WAS A MERMAN, HE WOULDN'T BE ONE NOW BECAUSE OF THE CONVERTER! THAT IS IF IT ALL HAPPENED... SO YOU SEE, I'LL NEVER REALLY KNOW IF IT WAS REAL OR A DREAM... I'LL NEVER KNOW...



THE END

NO WONDER EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT ROBIN THE BOY WONDER — BECAUSE EVERYONE IS FOLLOWING HIM IN STAR SPANGLED COMICS!

